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# SOCIAL CLASS, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND LIFE CHANCES: A CASE STUDY ON ROTHERHAM

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science by Research in Sociology

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March 2019

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## **Abstract**

This research provides an analytical overview of the possibility of social mobility and life chances for working-class people living in Rotherham. It is almost half a century since the decimation of the coal and steel industries in Rotherham which created high unemployment in the area. More recently, Rotherham has become synonymous with institutional failings, political corruption and child sexual exploitation which has created divisions within its communities. Previous studies have highlighted that community cohesion is non-existent and problematic in 21<sup>st</sup> century Rotherham. Initially, a literature review was undertaken in which questions were unveiled regarding issues on the following topics: Social Class and Social Divide within UK Society; Economic Status-Divided Britain; Social Capital, Cultural Capital and Social Mobility; Educational Performance and the Working Classes; Health and Wellbeing in Deprived Communities; Urban Regeneration. To investigate the aforementioned issues ten semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a purposive sample of Rotherham politicians and community workers. Data was gathered and analysed which highlighted the following four key themes: Importance of Education; Raising Aspirations & Sustaining Social Mobility; Rebuilding a Sense of Community & Place: Regeneration of Rotherham and Implications of class. The themes this study identified indicate that there exists a poverty of aspirations among the town's people which is deliberated upon and discussed further within this thesis. The data indicated that education is key to gaining any type of social mobility. Furthermore, the data revealed that the town lacks cohesion and needs to rebuild its communities, and that an individual's social class affects life chances. The research further revealed that many of the participants believe that universities in the UK are still elitist which deters many working-class students from applying. This thesis concludes that the life chances for most residents of Rotherham are somewhat limited. This research study highlighted that education is the key to social mobility and that more government investment in the education system is required to ensure that everyone has access to the same resources. It was also evident that there is poverty of aspirations in the town which participants in this study believe can be addressed with both vision and hope. Finally, the rebuilding of local communities and the regeneration of rundown areas of the town must also be addressed to give everyone living in Rotherham better life chances.

## **Key Words**

Social Capital, Social Mobility, Social Class, Life Chances, Deprivation, Health and Wellbeing, Urban Regeneration

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background Context

This is a case study on Rotherham which is a town situated in South Yorkshire in the North of England. The town has a strong industrial past, which was predominantly the production of steel, glass, pottery and coal, and work was readily available to anyone who wanted it in the 19<sup>th</sup> century-the at height of industrialisation. However, in the 1920's and early 1930's work was scarce after the Great War, the 'depression' affected the town and poverty was prevalent (Memories of Rotherham, 2004). Post-World War 2, the town underwent redevelopment and the majority of the population travelled to work on public transport. Rotherham had great transport links with trams, trains and buses as well as the canal which was used to transport many raw materials for the manufacture of glass in the town which is still in production today.



Figure 1.1. Source: Google Images (2018).

Rotherham and neighbouring Sheffield became renowned for their steel production around the world, particularly cutlery. There were dozens of foundries and rolling mills between the two towns which employed many local people. The coal mines in the area also employed a large number of local men. This meant a much better standard of living for the towns' people and it became a thriving town with many retailers (Memories of Rotherham, 2004). Trade unions had a high membership in the area and local businesses and socialists alike reinforced and promoted



education for workers. The existing college of arts and technology was originally the mechanics institute in the 1850's (Memories of Rotherham, 2004).

However, since the 1980's, under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, almost all of the industries in South Yorkshire were closed. Consequently, unemployment has remained high in the town, and certain areas of Rotherham have been described as 'deprived', whereby both life chances and indeed life expectancy in the town are both lower than the national average (Jay, 2014; Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 2016/17). The children of those made redundant in the 1980's now have children of their own, many of whom have never worked. In these areas, living in poverty also means poor educational achievement and poor health and diet (Baggini, 2014). Rotherham has traditionally been a Labour 'safe seat', with three parliamentary constituencies: Rother Valley, Rotherham, and Wentworth & Dearne Valley. However, according to Baggini (2014) many of the towns' people no longer trust any of the major political parties. The bigger concern is that there has been a 'failure of the political classes to deal with the problems faced by those left behind in post-industrial Britain' (Baggini, 2014, p. 20).

Contemporary Rotherham has great transport links and is directly served by the M1 motorway. It has a regular train service and the newly opened tram/train link to Sheffield (2018) which now passes through the town. It has a population of 260,800, the majority of whom dwell in suburban areas, as seventy-two per cent of the region is green belt. The town has a diverse population which includes 20,000 people from minority ethnic groups, mainly Pakistani/Kashmiri and Slovak/Czech Roma – the majority of whom live in urban areas close to the town centre, which are run down and in need of regeneration (Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 2018, p.7). The publishing of the Jay Report (2014) which brought to light the historical child sexual exploitation (CSE) an estimated 1,400 young girls, and institutional failings by the council, social services and the police. Since then the town has seen a 'breakdown within communities, and a significant rise in hate crimes, which means that the towns' morale is at an all-time low. It has also been identified that immigration and 'ethnic segregation' are major issues in the town' (Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 2016/17, p.7). Here is how Charlesworth (2000, pp. 138-284) described some of the people of Rotherham: 'Pakistani and white working-class people in the former industrial town of Rotherham in South Yorkshire are 'linguistically dispossessed', 'sensorily impoverished' and 'perceptually deprived'. At present Rotherham has several plans in place which aim to boost

the economic prospects of the town, alongside promoting the health and wellbeing of the towns' residents. Another major boost for the town will be University Campus Rotherham (UCR) which opened in September 2018. The above plans will be discussed in Chapter 4.

## 1.2. Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to examine the town of Rotherham as a case study, the key question being: does and individuals social class limit their social mobility and life chances? To meet this aim four objectives were identified: 1) To undertake a literature review exploring the current issues and debates around the following topics: social capital, social mobility, social class, life chances, deprivation, health and wellbeing, and urban regeneration. From the literature review research questions were identified to conduct this qualitative study. The research questions centre on education, social class and social mobility. 2) To apply the theoretical approach of interpretivism to this study 3) A qualitative approach was used in the form of semi-structured interviews, with a purposive sample of Rotherham politicians and community workers/leaders. 4) To examine reports, policies and plans in place by the council for the future of the town, which goes some way to explaining the reasons behind the lack of community cohesion and the poverty of aspirations of the towns' people.

## 1.3. Structure of Thesis

This thesis is spread over five chapters. Firstly, Chapter 1 provides a brief historical background of Rotherham, secondly, the aims and objectives of this study are outlined and finally the structure of the thesis is presented. Chapter 2 outlines the detailed literature review, plus the key points from documentary data sources on the following topics: Social Class & Social Divide within UK Society; Economic Status-Divided Britain; Social Capital, Cultural Capital & Social Mobility; Educational Performance and the Working Class; Health and Wellbeing in Deprived Communities; Urban Regeneration. The literature review examined some of the current issues and debates around the above topics related to this research project. The discussion within this chapter enabled the researcher to formulate the research questions used for this study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of this study and the theoretical framework which underpins it. A qualitative approach was used in the form of semi-structured interviews. Interpretivism was deemed the most appropriate approach as it fits well with qualitative research. This framework places the emphasis on the participant's views, opinions and their own lived experiences, which provides rich, thick data which is then interpreted by

the researcher throughout the analysis process. The chapter goes on to discuss the ethical considerations of this project and a rationale is provided as to why Rotherham was chosen as the case study.

The current research findings and analysis are incorporated within Chapter 4. The chapter also provides a discussion and analysis of the data collected. Comparisons are made between the key points taken from the literature review and the findings from this study. The findings are broken down into four themes which include: Importance of Education; Raising Aspirations & Sustaining Social Mobility; Rebuilding a Sense of Community & Place; Regeneration of Rotherham and Implications of Class and Culture. Finally, Chapter 5, features the conclusion of this thesis and contained within this section is a summary of the key points from the literature review and the research findings. It goes on to discuss the limitations of this study in areas such as: sample size, ethnicity and demographics. The chapter concludes with recommendations made by the researcher for further areas of research in the future which would benefit the town of Rotherham.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Literature Review.**

A literature review has been undertaken to discuss contemporary issues and debates around 6 key topics which are: 1) Social Class & Social Divide within UK Society; 2) Economic Status-Divided Britain; 3) Social Capital, Cultural Capital & Social Mobility; 4) Educational Performance and the Working Class; 5) Health and Wellbeing in Deprived Communities; 6) Urban Regeneration. The topics were chosen to address the title of this study which explores why and how an individual's social class can limit their social mobility and life chances, particularly in the town of Rotherham. By researching and reviewing the literature on these topics the research questions for this study became apparent. Furthermore, the gaps in the literature informed the research questions and the overall direction of this study.

#### **2.1. Social Class & Social Divide Within UK Society**

Historically, since the nineteenth century there has been a three-tier model of class in the UK, which comprises of upper class, middle class and working class (Atkinson, 2015). These 'labels' were given to distinguish between the differing social circumstances of people because of industrialisation, in other words to highlight the differences between workers, managers and owners (Savage, 2015). Social class could be viewed as '...an analytical construct or a folk category' (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 325). Whereas, according to Savage (2015, p. 45) 'class is fundamentally tied up with inequalities' Furthermore, he stated '...social classes, we contend are fundamentally associated with the stored historical baggage and the accumulation of advantages over time' (p.46).

Some academics would argue that social class is based upon 'power and domination which is embedded in economic institutions of capitalism' (Flemmen, 2013, p. 325). A capitalist society is usually based upon 'class divisions' which occur as a direct result of capitalist economies (Flemmen, 2013). However, others would argue that the term 'class' is an outdated notion, and indeed argue that there is an emerging 'new phase of modernity' (Flemmen, 2013, p. 326). An individual's class position is determined by their involvement '...in their economic lives – that is, in labour markets and workplaces; or, in short, by their employment relations' (Goldthorpe, 2016, p. 90). After pioneering research since the 1960's, sociologist Goldthorpe framed a new British class system which had seven categories according to: The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) (Goldthorpe, 2016). The list below illustrates the seven-class system: 1) Higher managerial and professional occupations; 2) Lower managerial and

professional occupations; 3) Ancillary professional and administrative occupations-Intermediate; 4) Small employers (less than 25 employers) and own account workers classes; 5) Lower supervisory and technical occupations; 6) Semi-routine occupations-working class; 7) Routine occupations (Goldthorpe, 2016, p. 20).

At the height of industrialisation and the production of goods, much of the working population were employed in the manufacturing industry, predominantly steel and coal, by far outnumbering other workforce sectors, this led to the 'masculine image' of working-class people (Atkinson, 2015, p. 10). In the contemporary world, in most cases society can be described as primarily capitalist, this is due to three changes: 1) Post-industrialism; 2) The rise of neoliberalism; 3) The rise of 'new cultural practices' (Atkinson, 2015, p. 9). For people working in post-industrial economies there has been an increase in both education and skills and the emphasis was now being placed on the providing of services and the production of knowledge rather than goods (Atkinson, 2015). Since de-industrialisation in the seventies and the birth of neoliberalism, it is argued that for markets to be prosperous and to benefit all, governments must support competition and a free market, which in turn promotes economic growth (Atkinson, 2015). In contrast, Savage, Ward and Devine (2005) argue that 'class' is not generated by a capitalist economy. Moreover, they believe 'class' is another form of inequality which develops from the 'intersections of diverse fields' (Flemmen, 2013, p. 340).

According to Rubin, Denson, Kilpatrick, Matthews, Stehlik & Zyngier, (2014, p.196) social class and socio-economic status (SES) are rooted in the connections between an individual's social, cultural, and economic upbringing and position within society. Also, worth considering are variables such as: age, gender and ethnicity. An individual's social class undoubtedly influences everything from how they dress, what they eat, how they speak, their outlook on life and their general health and wellbeing. Social class is often based upon one's socio-cultural background which often remains the same from generation to generation. Whereas, SES is linked to one's present economic circumstances which can alter depending on whether an individual dwells in a country where meritocracy is possible. This means that an individual with a working-class background can work in a professional field, thus earning a higher salary. In other words, an individual may earn a large salary, but this does not necessarily mean they would move in to a different class (Rubin et al. 2014).

In contrast, other sociologists would argue that: social class tends to be more fixed which leaves it open to 'discrimination and prejudice' (Rubin et al. 2014, p.197). Furthermore, research

suggests that social class and SES can be determined by ‘income, occupation, education and material possessions (Rubin et al. 2014, p. 197). Whereas, Savage, Warde and Devine (2005, p. 42) regard social class as an outcome of a range of practices, like Bourdieu's view:

Class is an effect – not a set of relationships or a structure. It is manifest through the operation of many fields; it is an emergent effect of the structuring of many specific fields. Capitals are the underpinnings not of class structure per se, but of fields – where volume and trajectory of agents' holdings of particular capitals is central to the dynamics of fields. There is no primary generative ‘mechanism’ behind class [...]. The emergent effect, class division, arises for Bourdieu across many relatively autonomous fields cited in (Flemmen, 2013, p. 340).

Furthermore, Bourdieu (1984) stated that: ‘A society's class structure is to be seen as a multidimensional space, which objectifies the system of relationships between diverse positions’ cited in (Flemmen, 2013, p. 340). Similarly, writers, Skeggs (1997), Sayer (2005) and Atkinson (2011) were all inspired by Bourdieu's notion of class or stratification and all agree that the notion of class could be described as: ‘referring to positions or sets of positions within a social space that represents the distribution of, and relationships between various forms of capital’ (Flemmen, 2013, p. 336). Furthermore, Skeggs (1997, p.7) states that ‘class is a major feature of subjectivity [...] and part of a struggle over access to resources and ways of being’ (Flemmen, 2013, p. 335).

In summary, the traditional 3 class system is outdated and no longer exists in Britain, instead there is now the seven-class system (Goldthorpe, 2016). Post-industrialisation has seen a shift from the emphasis on the production of goods, to the provision of services and a greater emphasis has been placed on education and the sharing of knowledge. It is argued that class is a consequence of a capitalist society (Flemmen, 2013). However, Bourdieu (1987, p. 325) believed that class could be a construct and a ‘folk category’. Whereas, Savage (2015) argues that the term class is directly related to inequalities. Other academics believe the term class is related to income and possessions (Rubin et al, 2014).

## 2.2. Economic Divide.

According to recent studies by historians and sociologists, people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century view themselves as not belonging to any class (Savage, 2015). In 2011, the government sponsored the BBC Great British Class Survey (GBCS) led by sociology professors Mike Savage and Fiona Devine and the findings were published in 2013 (Savage, 2015). It is said that over 9 million people participated in the survey which identified new class categories by using income as the key indicator. They are as follows:

Class	Income
1. Elite	£89k
2.Established	£47k
3.Technical middle class	£37k
4.New affluent workers	£29k
5.Emerging service workers	£21k
6.Traditional working-class	£13k
7.Precariat	£8k

Table 2.1. Class categories based on income. Source: (Savage, 2015, p. 169).

Danny Dorling a Professor of human geography has played a major role in explaining how inequalities exist in Britain using visual maps which detail spatial inequalities (Peace, 2011). Professor Dorling, alongside other academics states that there are obvious north-south divisions in the UK in terms of wealth and health, particularly in the cases of child poverty and pensioner poverty. Successive governments have set out to tackle child poverty, however there have only been noticeable reductions, in areas which were otherwise considered wealthy (Dorling and Thomas, 2011). Similarly, Hacking et al. (2011) state there is significant inequality in ‘all-cause’ mortality between the North and South of England between 1965 and 2008, and they note an increase in inequality between 2000 and 2008 (Lloyd, 2016). Likewise, Gardiner et al. (2013) argue that the north-south economic divide has increased and become more obvious in recent times (Lloyd, 2016).

The Social Mobility Commission headed by Rt Hon Alan Millburn, is an advisory service sponsored by the Cabinet office, Department of Education and the Department of Work and Pensions, has recently published a report: *Social Mobility in Great Britain: State of the Nation* (2017) which states that the north/south divide no longer exists. However, a postcode lottery of hot-spots and cold-spots exists which identifies the worst areas in the UK are no longer inner-city areas, but remote rural and coastal areas. The report also highlights a ‘geographical divide which sees London pulling away from the rest of the country. According to Millburn (2017, p. 11): ‘There is a self-reinforcing spiral of ever-growing division’. The North is said to be £6 billion underfunded in comparison to London. The Social Mobility Index states there are 324 local authorities in the UK, which uses 16 indicators for every stage of life. According to the index the East and West Midlands are identified as the worst performing local authority areas, the best being Westminster. The report’s findings state there is not a direct correlation to

the affluence of a particular area, to the level of social mobility (SM). The report goes on to state that ‘local policies by local authorities and employers greatly influences the life chances for residents’ (Social Mobility Commission, 2017, p. 11).

Below are some key findings from the report: 1) The biggest divide is identified as being between London and the rest of the country. London provides more opportunities for residents (including the poorest). The highest performing areas for social mobility are Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Hackney; 2) New ‘cold spot’ areas for social mobility are rural areas, coastal towns and former industrial areas, particularly in the Midlands. Just 13% of young people from former industrial areas, and 14% from rural areas got to university compared with 27% in ‘hotspots’ The worst ‘cold spot’ areas are: Carlisle, Corby, Weymouth and Portland, Newark and Sherwood, and West Somerset 3) There is no direct correlation between the affluence of an area and social mobility; 4) Local policies used by local authorities and employers can positively influence outcomes for disadvantaged residents. The report highlights examples of areas that are bucking the trends through the adoption of new approaches and best practice (Social Mobility Commission, 2017, pp 7-8).

According to Friedman and Laurison (2017, p.476) the dichotomy of the north-south divide, which traditionally has been ‘regionally specific and symbolically imagined’ has increasingly become outdated when examining class divisions in the UK, particularly regarding spatial inequalities. In recent times research has noted a rise in social inequality in the UK and studies have shown that the chances of people buying their own houses have dropped in comparison to earlier generations. The same studies highlighted that millennials will find themselves less well off than their parents (Jackson, 2017). The publication of the *Panel for Fair Access to the Professions* (Cabinet Office, 2010) states that the top professions in the UK had become more difficult to access for those from working class backgrounds. Analysis has shown that there is a clear link between a parent’s salary and access to the top jobs in the country (Friedman and Laurison, 2017). Furthermore, in 2014, the Labour Force Survey (LFC) revealed that individuals who are not employed in ‘professional ’or ‘managerial’ positions earn on average 17 per cent less per annum than those from privileged backgrounds, which is due to them being employed by smaller businesses, having lower educational achievements, also being employed outside London. Other factors were also significant such as: gender, age, ethnicity and human capital. This demonstrates that even the upwardly mobile face a ‘class-ceiling’ inside the UK’s high earning jobs (Friedman and Laurison, 2017, p. 475).



According to Savage, (2016) in Great Britain it is evident there has been a shift, whereby the gap between the elites and the middle and low-income wage earners has widened. It seems that in the developed world there is a growing 'anti-elite' feeling. This was illustrated in the vote on whether to remain or leave the European Union (EU). There were geographical differences in the voting which made evident the divide in Great Britain. A high number of professional and educated people voted to stay in the EU, whereas, the 'disadvantaged, who are viewed as culturally and socially cut off' (p. 476), mostly in the old industrial areas voted to leave the EU. Similarly, in the United States the divisions became apparent when surprisingly Donald Trump was elected president (Savage, 2016).

Since the 1990's, sociologists have been interested in a different approach to class, particularly how class and inequality 'intersect'. It is argued that: '...intersectionality offers a frame to think about the co-constitution of ethnic, racial, class, sexual and gendered identities and the production of social inequalities...' (Degnen and Tyler, (2017, p. 2). Furthermore, intersectionality is both a theoretical and a methodological approach to the study of inequalities (Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 130), whereby 'oppression and subordination are lodged in various subject positions and social divisions such as gender, sexuality, race, age and class' (Degnen and Tyler, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, Degnen and Tyler (2017, p. 4) state that the concept of intersectionality allows social scientists to contemplate the way in which types of differences align and are experienced by individuals, therefore 'power is reproduced via social practices, institutional formations and ideologies' (Davis, 2008, p. 68). The World Inequality Report (2018) demonstrates that:

...income inequality has increased in nearly all world regions in recent decades, but at different speeds. The fact that inequality levels are so different among countries, even when countries share similar levels of development, highlights the important roles that national policies and institutions play in shaping inequality. Cited in (Alvaredo, Chancel, Piketty, Saez, Zuchman, 2018, p. 5).

Furthermore, the report states that to tackle global wealth inequality there needs to be a change in both '...national and global tax policies, educational policies, corporate governance and wage setting policies' (World Inequality Report, 2018, p.15). These policies all need to be reviewed in many countries including the UK (Alvaredo et al. 2018). In summary, Academics such as Danny Dorling argue there still exists a north/south divide in the UK in terms of wealth, health, child poverty and pensioner poverty, there is also a notable difference in the mortality rates between the north and south. Whereas, the Social Mobility Commission (2017) published a report stating: the north/south divide no longer exists and that instead there are postcode hot-

spots and cold-spots which include many rural areas and coastal towns rather than inner city areas. Funding cuts to local authorities in the North are blamed for the inequalities which exist today.

### 2.3. Social Capital, Cultural Capital and Social Mobility

According to Schuller and Field (1998, p. 229) the term human capital was first used in the 1960's by Schultz and Becker who acknowledged that to gain economic growth, investment must be made in both education and skills, as well as in machinery and equipment. James Coleman (1988) further developed this idea and developed the term social capital which can be:

...defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors- whether persons or corporate actors within the structure (Schuller and Field, 1998, p. 98).

Coleman recognised that the effects of social capital within families and within communities, particularly between parents and their children, by way of actively being involved in their education. With regards to communities, social capital is built when parents strengthen 'each other's norms' and have close relationships with institutions within their own communities (Schuller and Field, 1998, p. 229). Similarly, it is suggested that a greater amount of social capital can aid communities particularly when recovering from controversy. Therefore, social capital can be viewed as a 'consequence as well as a cause of community action' (Allen 2001, p. 120). Therefore, Allen (2001, p. 120) concludes 'how social capital can enhance the community's ability to manage resources but may develop because of collective action such as resolving local conflict'. Likewise, Pierre Bourdieu described social capital as being: '...the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 119).

Similar to a Marxist perspective, Bourdieu's philosophy was influenced by the notion of social hierarchy, and he believed that 'economic capital is at the root of all other capitals' (Bourdieu, 1986, p.252) cited in (Field, 2014, p.15). Bourdieu originally used the term 'cultural capital' to describe the inequality of academic accomplishments of children belonging to different social classes. However, he applied the same principles to social capital, particularly the notion of 'social assets' (Field, 2014, p. 16). Social mobility Bourdieu views as being important, he says

‘it is the range and nature of people’s social networks, which can affect people’s life chances’ (Savage, 2015, p. 52).

The work of both Bourdieu & Coleman is synonymous with social capital theories and Bourdieu (1986, p. 247) defines social capital as ‘membership in a group which provides each of its members a credential which entitles them to credit’. Bourdieu (1986) contends that ‘all capital derives from economic capital and that social capital is simply the expenditure of labour’ (Gordon, 2013, p. 385). Whereas Coleman (1988) viewed social capital as a type of structure which is distinct by its function. He further argued that there is a degree of social structure required which influences the actions of the actors, whether on a personal level or at a corporate level (Gordon, 2013). Likewise, Lockett et al. (2012) claim that the benefits of having social capital are connected to successful business acumen and improved performance (Cooke and Wills, 1999; Yli-Reenka et al., 2001).

However, Anderson et al. (2007) state that to gain social capital investment must be made which will obtain a return in the future, but it is a slow process which requires time to develop (Gordon, 2013). Gedailovic et al (2013) argue that social capital is a multifaceted term whereby many scholars agree upon its definition, however, there is little agreement on how it can be put into practice (Gordon, 2013). Both cultural capital and social capital mean that class can be understood as having ‘other inequalities such as those which exist around age, gender, race and ethnicity (Savage, 2015, p. 53). In the past our perception of the term class has been largely based upon an individual’s occupation and the differences between middle and working class. This is where the social divisions have occurred in the past. The different types of ‘capital’ show class as being structured in a different way (Savage, 2015). The ‘wheel of fortune’ model highlights the polarization between the classes (See Appendix 10).

The phenomenon of social capital enables those from advantaged backgrounds and wide social networks to get on in life. This is due to the ‘old boy’s network’ which still exists today. It also illustrates the importance of wider social ties through things like faith, unions or hobbies, which can gain advantages (Savage, 2016). This ‘capitals, assets and resources’ (CARs) perspective is influenced by the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) who views class as being a combination of a variety of ‘capitals’ which enables people to gather their ‘capitals’ for them to gain advantages over others (Savage, 2016).

In contrast, Robert Putnam (1993, p. 167) who came from a political science background, rather than a sociological one, described the term after completing a study on institutional

performances as: ‘*Social capital* here refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions’ cited in (Field, 2004, p. 31). Likewise, Anderson and Jack (2002) state that social capital signifies the consequences of the learning process, particularly learning about each other to build trust (Gordon, 2013).

Over the last twenty-five years, there has been much written about social capital by a variety of scholars from all disciplines, whereby many different theories emerged. As a result, some would say that ‘the term social capital...has become a metaphor for almost any area of sociological ideas’ (Adam and Roncevic, 2003; Fine, 2010; Foley and Edwards, 1999; Sandefur and Laumann, 1998) cited in (Gordon, 2013). Furthermore, from a political perspective using the work of Banfield (1958) and Putnam (1993) some economists have claimed that ‘social capital is an important determinant of economic development and of the functioning of institutions (Nannicini et al., 2013). It is argued that social capital has the capacity to: ‘...improve economic well-being and the functioning of institutions: political accountability. The main idea is that voters who share values and beliefs that foster cooperation are more likely to vote based on criteria of social welfare rather than narrow personal interest’ (Nannicini et al., 2013, p. 222).

Similarly, Gonzalez and Nowell (2016, p. 3) acknowledge that there are many definitions of *social capital*. However, they define it as: ‘social ties, information, obligations, expectations, and the social norms of a group of people that enable an individual to act’ (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998; Son, Lin and George, 2008). They further argue that there are three subtypes which are: Social bonding, social bridging and social linking. The former being the close social ties with family members, the second is the loose ties between friends and neighbours who may be of similar socio-economic backgrounds. Finally, social linking is the most important, as it links individuals from a variety of backgrounds which ultimately leads to a wider range of opportunities (Briggs, 1998; Gittel and Vidal, 1998; Woolcock, 2001). Their study concludes that ‘civic engagement’ is primarily social and Adler and Goggin, (2005) define civic engagement as ‘individuals who participate in the life of the community to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future’ (Gonzales and Nowell, 2016, p. 3).

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can be inherited from parents in the form of education. He further argues that well educated parents pass on their knowledge to their children, in order that they may succeed at school, college and university, which will then hopefully lead them

to a good job. Bourdieu goes on to state that ‘the transmission of cultural capital, however is opaque ...masked in a language of meritocratic achievement and hard work’ (Savage, 2015, p. 51). Children raised in a household that regularly visit the theatre and often discuss literature etcetera have a certain advantage over children who have little or no experience of these things (Savage, 2015).

When there is an absence of economic capital, it limits the social capital and cultural capital available to individuals and the life chances they can anticipate. Therefore, social mobility becomes challenging, hence most people who are born into poverty will remain there. It is evident that living in poverty restricts people from participating within society, in order that they can facilitate change, which in turn will improve their prospects. The knock-on effect is that this can lead to fuel poverty, poor diet, and harmful lifestyles, which ultimately leads to a lack of aspiration. Unemployment and poorly paid jobs are the most common collective causes of poverty, also poor health and disability can be viewed as significant factors (Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 2016/17).

Social mobility is defined as: ‘the differences in social achievement according to social background. When taken in this restricted sense, social immobility can also be called inequality of social opportunity’ (ISO) (Boudon, 1974, p. 31). Studies on *social mobility* since the 1950’s have tended to remain in the domain of sociologists led by an Oxford based group known as the Nuffield School, who defined social mobility as ‘movement between occupational categories across generations’ (Brown, 2013, p. 679). Also, according to Brown (2013) there are two types of social mobility which are: absolute and relative. Absolute social mobility is described as the most common and measures ‘outflow’ and ‘inflow’ whereby people can move up or down the social scale (classes). This notion can apply to people who are upwardly mobile from working-class to the intermediate classes. However, relative *social mobility* is viewed as being more a measure of equality which is used to measure the equality of opportunity, whereby every child will have an equal chance of being born into a given class with the ability to move to another.

In 2008, Prime Minister and Labour party leader Gordon Brown spoke of improving the ‘social mobility’ of the poorest people in British society. In a speech he stated, ‘making Britain more ‘upwardly mobile’ was a ‘great moral endeavour’ (BBC News Online, 2008). On the other hand, the opposition leader at the time David Cameron stated: ‘Mr. Brown had failed to focus on ‘elements of our society that are broken’ (BBC News Online, 2008). Brown went on to

describe himself as ‘a child of the first great wave of post-war social mobility’ (BBC News online, 2008). However, he went on to state that this was not the case during the 1970’s and 1980’s referring to a ‘lost generation’ of ‘Thatcher’s children’ who had been left behind (BBC News online, 2008). Mr. Brown also stated that there would be a government white paper on social mobility which would be forthcoming later in the year. He went on to say, ‘We must set a national priority to aggressively and relentlessly develop the potential of the British people’ (BBC News Online, 2008). Furthermore, Kate Green of the Child Poverty Action Group (2008) said that:

Britain was "in the grip" of a "damaging culture of inequality". She also said: "It is gross inequality that is the enemy of opportunity and social mobility. It is Britain's exceptional gap between the richest and poorest that has created a gulf that can no longer be navigated (BBC News Online, 2008).

In 2011, a Social Mobility Commission was set up under the Life Chances Act 2010, chaired by Rt Hon Alan Millburn and the deputy chair Rt Hon Baroness Gillian Shepard. The key roles of the Commission were: ‘Monitoring progress on improving social mobility, providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility, undertaking social mobility advocacy (Friedman, Laurison & Macmillan, 2017, p. 2). Alan Millburn (2012) stated that:

...social mobility is about breaking the transmission of disadvantage from one generation to the next. When a society is mobile it gives each individual, regardless of background, an equal chance of income or occupation. The upsurge in professional employment in the middle of the last century created an unparalleled wave of social mobility in Britain. It created unprecedented opportunities for millions of women and men. In the decades since then social mobility has largely stagnated (Millburn, 2012, p. 1).

Several years later, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission’s Report (2014), ‘*Elitist Britain*’, suggested that ‘Britain is deeply elitist’. Further, the Bridge Group’s report stated: ‘the situation looks set to continue unless we take action now’. The report identified that the ‘Fast Stream Intake’ is the most prominent path into the Civil Service, and that it is ‘deeply unrepresentative’ of the lower socio-economic groups within our society. One in three people in Britain today are in a routine/manual occupation yet only 4.4% of those who received offers to the ‘Fast Stream’ in 2014 had a family background of manual labour. In every group of universities from which the Civil Service recruits, ‘Fast Stream’ applicants are less likely to come from lower socio-economic groups. It is argued that ‘true social mobility’ can only be accomplished by considering the whole labour force, to determine how we can appeal to, maintain and develop individuals’ careers based on ‘merit and potential, not ‘polish’.

In his blog the Rt Hon. Matthew Hancock MP (2016) set out an action plan for social mobility. He stated that the Civil Service ‘needs to harness the talent of the whole nation and reflect modern Britain’. He spoke of the Talent Action Plan (2016), which had made an assurance it would increase diversity and tackle inequality. He stated that to be an ‘effective organisation’, evidence suggests that organisation is run more efficiently with a diverse workforce, as they bring different perspectives into the workplace. A requirement of the action plan is that the civil service intends to: ‘...develop a measure of social mobility – a ground-breaking new standard metric of social and economic background’ (Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 20016/2017, p. 1).

In Britain, there has been much debate on the topic of social mobility, by both the media and political parties, which indicates it is a positive thing which government policies should aim to promote. However, so far policies have failed to address it effectively, and social mobility continues to be a key social policy issue regarded as important by the three main political parties. This is primarily because it facilitates dialogue on social justice. However, the discussions have disregarded the notion of the traditional ‘neo-liberal model of political economy, which suggests that inequalities are tolerable so long as absolute poverty is kept in check and socio-economic rewards appear to be meritocratically distributed’ (Nunn, 2012, p. 87). Furthermore, Nunn (2012, p. 87) argues that policy concerned with ‘social mobility is more about increasing productivity and competitiveness through social adjustment to the demands of neo-liberal capitalism’. Therefore, it could be argued that all the political parties are more concerned with the strength of the economy, than with individuals and their social mobility.

According to Brown (2013, p. 679) in over fifty years there have been many different theories on social mobility, particularly post-World War 2 which was described as the ‘golden age of social mobility’. Grammar schools had a great part to play in this, by encouraging many intelligent working-class boys to aim for meritocracy, whereby they were able to become upwardly socially mobile, and many from this era went on to become members of the ‘elite’. However, in the 1970’s and 1980’s after the closure of grammar schools the ‘golden age’ came to a halt, which could have been due to slow economic growth, or indeed a growth in inequality. Since the 1990’s, there was a noticeable upturn in opportunities for working-class people. However, in recent times ‘Britain is at the bottom of the international league table for social mobility’ (Brown, 2013, p. 679). A report was published in early 2017: *Social Mobility, the*

*Class Pay Gap and Intergenerational Worklessness: New Insights from the Labour Force Survey.* Here are the key findings:

43% of people in Britain experience upward social mobility; 29% experience downward social mobility; the odds of those from professional or managerial backgrounds ending up in a professional or managerial job are 2.5 times higher than the odds for those from less advantaged backgrounds moving to the top; Those from working class backgrounds have odds 2.3 times higher than those from advantaged backgrounds of ending up in working-class jobs; Younger cohorts appear less mobile, although there are difficulties separating age and time effects; Black Caribbean's and Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic origins appear to be more mobile than those from white ethnic origins; 45% of earnings inequalities are passed across generations (Friedman, Laurison, and Macmillan, 2017, p. 9).

The latest report published by the Social Mobility Commission is: *The State of a Nation* (2017) which highlights several key trends which are: 1) The biggest divide is identified as being between London and the rest of the country. London provides more opportunities for residents (including the poorest). The highest performing areas for social mobility are Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Hackney; 2) Inner cities are no longer the worst performing areas for social mobility. Since the 1980's these areas have benefitted from economic investment in public transport and education; 3) New 'coldspot' areas for social mobility are rural areas, coastal towns and former industrial areas, particularly in the Midlands. Just 13% of young people from former industrial areas, and 14% from rural areas got to university compared with 27% in 'hotspots' The worst 'cold spot' areas are: Carlisle, Corby, Weymouth and Portland, Newark and Sherwood, and West Somerset; 4) There is no direct correlation between the affluence of an area and social mobility; 5) Policies used by local authorities and employers can positively influence outcomes for disadvantaged residents. The report highlights examples of areas that are bucking the trends through the adoption of innovative approaches and best practice. (Social Mobility Commission, 2017, pp. 7-8).

The report was published in late November 2017 and was directly followed by the resignation of the chairman of the commission Alan Millburn along with the rest of the board of directors (BBC News, 2017). According to Goldthorpe, (2016) many academics and politicians alike believe that education is the key to social mobility. However, he states that the roots of 'inequality of education' (p. 107) are deeply embedded in inequalities such as: living conditions, resources, all of which vary between different families living within the class structure. Because of his research Goldthorpe (2016, p.107) states that '...a whole range of economic and social policies are needed', which will ultimately lead to changes in the class



structure. If politicians are to promote the notion of ‘greater opportunity for all’ then they should prioritise ‘reducing social inequalities of condition’ (p.107).

In March 2018, former Education Secretary Justine Greening launched her social mobility pledge using the previous work of the Harrison Centre. The pledge aims to enlist the help of businesses both small and large. There are three facets to the pledge: partnership with schools, access to work experience or apprenticeships and promoting recruitment practices that provide a ‘level playing field’ for all (Social Mobility Pledge, p. 1). Many large companies have signed up to the pledge. Ms Greening stated ‘I believe that a common vision should be a mission of finally creating a Britain that has equality of opportunity. Brexit must be a moment for change when we can smash that glass ceiling on opportunity for once and for all’ (Whitfield, 2018, p.2). Furthermore, Ms Greening went on to say ‘Britain should be a country where you can get on in life, regardless of your background. Improving social mobility is a defining challenge for us as a nation. We have talent spread across this great country, but opportunity isn’t. Businesses, with the prosperity and careers they create for people, are key to improving social mobility’ (Social Mobility Pledge, 2018, p.1). Ms Greening views businesses as being key in developing an individual’s potential which is why she has called on them to sign up the pledge. The businesses which have already ‘signed up’ are: BT; Aviva; Adidas; ITV; and Clifford Chance. She has also enlisted the help of CBI and the Federation for small businesses. Further, another business that has signed up is KPMG LLP which is a provider of professional services in the UK. Deputy Chair of KPMG Melanie Richard views social mobility as the critical issue of our time. She comments: ‘Signing this pledge reinforces our strong commitment to boosting social mobility in the UK’ (KPMG, 2018, p.1). She went on further to say: ‘In this country, the circumstances into which you are born still have a decisive influence on the opportunities available to you in life. This cannot continue, and businesses can, and should, be part of the solution. We must rise up to the challenge, collaborating with parliamentarians, government, wider business and our communities to ensure that everyone reaches their full potential’ (KPMG, 2018, p.1). In Barnsley, South Yorkshire they have set up a Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) which is aimed at supporting talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to get into university or into their chosen careers. The CEO David Johnston states:

The Institute for Fiscal Studies - which found we increase the probability of a participant going to a university most visited by top employers by up to 43% - that our work makes a huge difference to the young people that access it. We also know from the rapid growth in employers

wanting to recruit SMF undergraduates that we are helping businesses find members of their future workforce (Social Mobility Foundation, 2016/17, p.1).

In summary, social capital within families is significantly strengthened when parents engage with their children's education, alongside building relationships within their local communities (Schuller and Field, 1998). Cultural capital according to Bourdieu is passed from parents to their children, particularly in households who engage with the arts such as literature and the theatre etcetera. However, the absence of economic capital can significantly limit both social and cultural capital (Savage, 2015). Social mobility has been discussed by academics since the 1950's, and it is defined as 'movement between occupational categories across generations' (Brown, 2013, p. 679). Successive governments have attempted to address social mobility. Recently, Justine Greening a conservative MP has launched a 'social mobility pledge', working in partnership with businesses and colleges (Social Mobility Pledge, 2018).

#### 2.4. Education and the Working Class

In her new book *Miseducation. Inequality, education and the working classes*, Professor Diane Reay (2017) wrote: according to Elliot (1965) 'The function of schooling is to preserve the class and select the elite' (p. 29). The Education Act (1944) was introduced by R.A. Butler which put in place publicly funded primary and secondary education for all children aged 5-14. The aim of the Act was to ensure that: '... it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development' (Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2008-09, p. 9) cited in Reay, 2017, p. 98). In the 1950's and 1960's, education in Great Britain was tailored for the different 'classes', however, grammar school, college and university was achievable for many working-class individuals. This era, as previously mentioned is often referred to as 'the golden age'. However, in the mid-seventies James Callaghan (Labour) made a speech which raised concerns that schools in the UK were not serving the pupils as well as they should (Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2008-09) cited in Reay, 2017, p. 98).

In the 1980's, within the education system there was a 'developing culture of audit, regulation and assessment introduced, alongside the introduction of the National Curriculum' in secondary schools in 1988, its function was to prescribe what children should be taught in school (Reay, 2017, p. 5). Professor Reay was a teacher at the time and she states it was visible that many of the children were now living in families that were no longer considered 'working

class' per se, as high unemployment and the closure of many industries (particularly in the North) had led to difficult times for many families. This time of economic insecurity undoubtedly affected the performance of these children, and ultimately influenced their future employment prospects (Reay, 2017). The National Curriculum was introduced in primary schools in 1989, and key stage testing began in 1991. John Major's Conservative Government introduced league tables in 1992 as part of the Citizens Charter. Following this, the Office for Standards of Education (OFSTED) was formed in 1993. Their role was to oversee the education system and to inspect schools on a regular basis to ensure standards of education and the National Curriculum was being taught to a satisfactory level (Children, Schools & Families Committee, 2008, 09). Today children are assessed at every key stage of their education beginning in primary schools with SATS, in secondary education – comprehensive schools and academies are assessed by GCSE's, further education (FE) – colleges are assessed by A levels, Access courses, foundation degrees, and in higher education (HE) awards such as Degrees/Masters/PHD's (Reay, 2017).

The Prime Minister Theresa May and the Shadow Leader Jeremy Corbyn both have education policies which place the emphasis on 'improving the chances of children from poor families' (The Economist, 2017, p. 28). Mr. Corbyn's manifesto pledged to abolish university tuition fees and wipe off some of the student debt, whereas Mrs. May's plan is to re-introduce grammar schools, which will offer scholarships to children from all backgrounds from the age of eleven. Polls suggest that although both proposals are popular with voters, evidence would suggest that neither policy would indeed develop the social mobility of poorer people. It is felt they could in fact do the opposite (The Economist, 2017). It is argued that:

Educational inequality over several decades has underpinned England's persistent skills inequality, and that the impact of social background may be leading to high levels of skills inequality both through processes external to the education system and through those internal to it (Green, Green and Pensiero, 2014, p. 3)

According to Reay (2017) in 21st century Britain, there has been a 'moral panic' about the fact that there has been a significant drop in the educational achievements of white working-class boys. Similarly, in post-Brexit Britain there was a moral panic regarding 'the anger and resentment of the white working class living in the Midlands and the North of England who voted disproportionately to leave the EU (Reay, 2017, p. 7). Both above points indicate a sense of unrest and uncertainty among working class people, particularly in the Midlands and Northern England. In his social analysis of education Wexler (2017, p.9) states that: schools

used to be viewed as the place where there is ‘social reproduction of class structure’. Furthermore, Wexler goes on to suggest that ‘cultural distortion’ also occurs, given this view, school education could be ‘suppressed speech’ (p. 9).

Furthermore, a study undertaken by Deeming (2013, pp.541-565) found that: age, health, education, family circumstances and housing greatly affect the ‘happiness’ of the UK population. This varied depending upon income and geographical location. Whereas, it was noted that gender, social class and employment do not have a significant impact on ‘happiness’. However, it was found that health is a significant cause of ‘happiness’, as is education. It was noted that there was an increase in feeling ‘unhappy’ particularly among those with lower educational achievements. Similarly, those individuals with no qualifications are twice as likely to report ‘unhappiness’ in comparison to those who have a university degree (Deeming, 2013, pp. 541-565).

In summary, in the past education was tailored to different classes via grammar schools, colleges and universities. However, since the 1980’s and the introduction of the school curriculum which also brought with it a ‘culture of audit, regulation and assessment’ (Reay, 2017). The introduction of league tables by John Major in 1990’s led to formation of the Office for Standards of Education (OFSTED). It is evident that in areas of the country where unemployment was high that the educational achievements of children began to suffer, particularly white working-class boys (Reay, 2017). Educational inequality over the years has led to a skills inequality in England (Greener, Greener and Pensiero, 2014, p. 3).

## 2.5. Health and Wellbeing in Deprived Areas

Wellbeing is defined as: ‘...when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge’ (Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders 2012, p. 9).

Whereas, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2004):

The social conditions in which people live powerfully influence their chances to be healthy. Indeed, factors such as poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, poor housing, unhealthy early childhood conditions and low occupational status are important determinants of most diseases, deaths and health inequalities between and within countries (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 2017, p.1).

In 2010, the Labour government published ‘*Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post-2010*, otherwise known as The Marmot Review’. The report highlighted inequalities within the UK, particularly regarding the health and wellbeing

of the population depending on their geographical location. However, within several months of the report being published there was a general election and the coalition government disregarded the findings of the review as they had their own agenda (Dorling, 2014, p. 299). The former Prime Minister of the coalition government David Cameron stated, ‘the success of the country was about more than economic growth’ (Paton, 2015, p. 20). However, it was four years later in October 2014 that the government set up the *What Works Centre for Wellbeing*, which was committed to ensuring that policies and services promoted wellbeing. The centre launched four research areas: cross-cutting capabilities, work, learning and wellbeing, bringing wellbeing to the community and culture, sport and wellbeing (Paton, 2015, p. 20). The director of the centre Nancy Hey stated ‘Our role is to improve wellbeing in the UK, by ensuring that the evidence base of interventions available for people is of high quality’ (Paton, 2015, p. 21).

According to Bache et al. (2016) there has been much interest and debate about the UK government’s policy aims to create happiness and wellbeing among the people of the country. Furthermore, research suggests that the UK is viewed as forward-thinking in its policy development around a ‘happiness index’. The happiness and wellbeing of the population has informed government policy throughout modern history. Moreover, in recent times successive governments have studied the population to formulate social policies which support wellbeing (Deeming, 2013). In the UK the Measuring National Wellbeing (MNW) Programme was introduced in 2010 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The aim of this programme was to measure the subjective wellbeing (SW) of the UK population (Deeming, 2013). According to Diener et al. (2009) the notion of checking and recording the wellbeing of the population has become increasingly popular. The MNW Programme was formulated to ‘monitor social progress and shape the direction of social policy’ (Deeming, 2013, pp. 541-565). The table below highlights some worldwide key developments which have been used to measure wellbeing:

1994	United Nations published first <i>Human Development Index</i>
2000	First issue of the <i>Journal of Happiness Studies</i> was published
2002	UK Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Report, <i>Life Satisfaction: The State of Knowledge and Implication for Government</i>
2007	European Commission initiates the ‘ <i>Beyond GDP</i> ’ Project

2008	President Sarkozy establishes the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress.
2009	OECD starts Better Life Initiative and Work programme on measuring wellbeing and progress.
2010	The US government establishes a Commission on Key National Indicators, allocating \$70 million to the project.
2010	The UK Office for National Statistics begins a programme to develop statistics to measure national wellbeing.
2011	The US National Research Council, the National Institute on Aging and the UK Economic and Social Research Council jointly support an expert panel on subjective wellbeing and public policy.
2011	UN General Assembly Resolution on Happiness 65/309.
2012	UN High-level meeting on happiness and wellbeing. Release of the <i>UN World Happiness Report</i>
2016	Getting it Right for Every Child: A National Policy Framework to Promote Children's Wellbeing in Scotland, UK
2016	The Good Life Working Together to Promote Opportunity and Improve Population Health and Wellbeing

Table 2.2. Measuring Wellbeing Worldwide. Source: Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) (2012: 2) cited in (Deeming, 2013, pp. 541-565).

Regardless of the amount of reports, measuring wellbeing Dorling (2010, p.188) stated: ‘...in the twenty first century health inequalities were on the rise, and mortality rates were often higher in areas such as inner cities and former coalfields’. Likewise, the Secretary of State for Health in the United Kingdom used an even more striking way of describing existing social inequities in health by pointing out that on a journey on the London Underground:

From Westminster to Canning Town in east London, just eight stops, life expectancy for men drops by one year per stop. That pattern in some form is repeated in every European country which is utterly unacceptable in civilised developed countries (Hewitt, 2005) cited in (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 2017, p. 13).

The 5 key determinants of health in Western countries are: 1) Socioeconomic, 2) Cultural and environmental conditions; 3) Living and working conditions; 4) Social and community networks; 5) Individual lifestyle factors; 6) Age, sex and constitutional factors (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1993) cited in (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 2017, p. 31). Some academics argue that:

‘the north–south divide in the UK, and in England in particular, is made up of both economic and health-related disparities, among other socioeconomic factors’ (Buchan et al. 2017, p.1). In the 2000’s the Index for Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which aims to measure deprivation in seven areas which are 1) income; 2) employment; 3) education and skills; 4) health and disability; 5) crime; 6) barriers to housing and services; 7) living environment’ (Buchan et al. (2017). The English Indices of Deprivation measures the levels of deprivation in different geographical locations. However, ‘more research is required, particularly around the geography of deprivation, that is, are there ‘cluster’ areas in particular geographical locations’ (Buchan et al. 2017, p. 2). Because of their study Buchan et al. (2017, p. 2) ‘...hypothesised that between 2004 and 2015, and especially after the 2008 financial crisis, spatial autocorrelation for deprivation would increase, indicating increasing spatial clustering of both poverty and wealth’

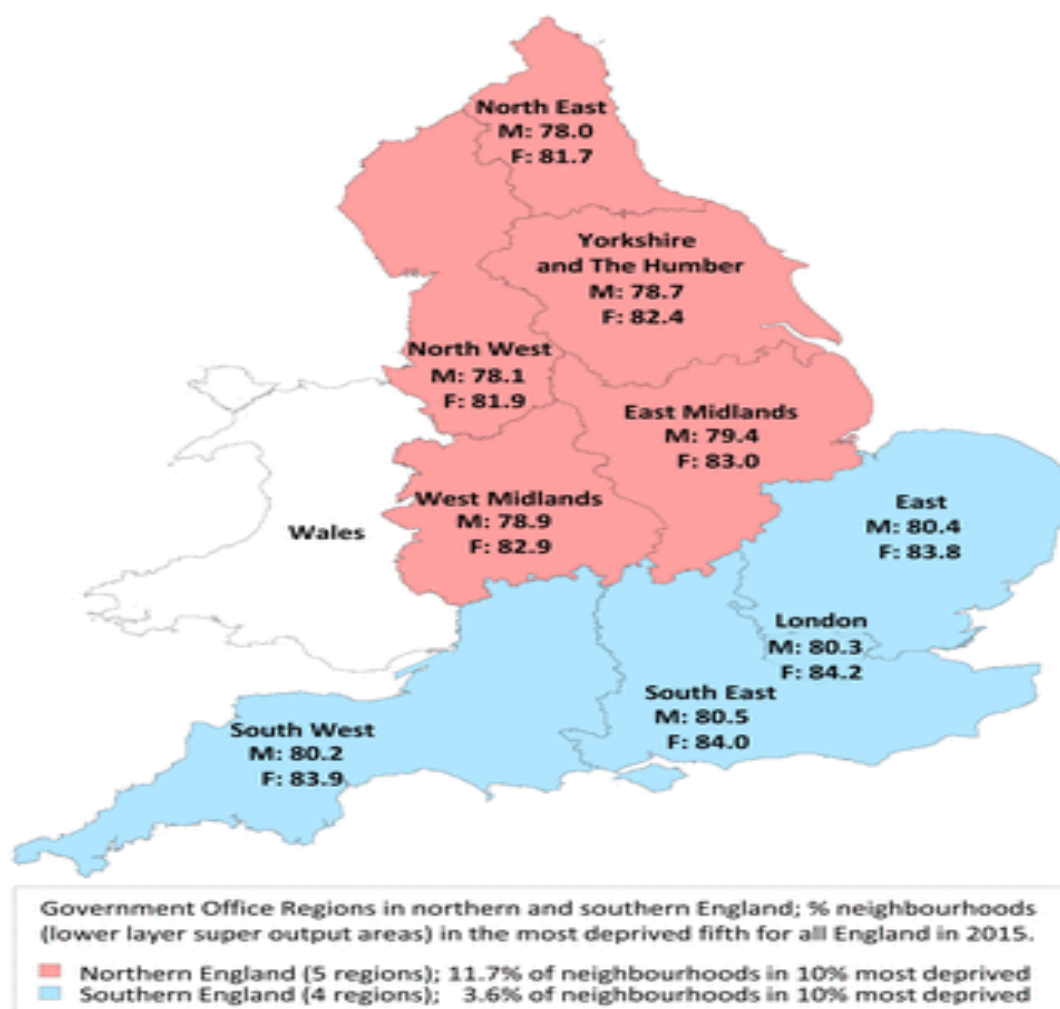


Figure 2. 2. Mortality Rates. Source: (Buchan et al, 2017, p. 3).

The above map indicates there is as much as 2.8 years difference in mortality age for someone living in the Midlands and Northern England in comparison to people in living in and around London and the South East. It is also evident, that since The Marmot Review (2010) the government has not had a clear action plan to tackle health inequalities. The recently published UK Naylor Review revealed that the sale of many NHS plots of land around the country to raise funds. It remains to be seen whether the extra funding will indeed ‘reduce or increase the gap in healthcare between the north and south of England’ (Buchan et al. 2017, p. 3). In summary, the Marmot Review (2010) highlighted the health and wellbeing inequalities in England depending on geographical location. This is further illustrated by Buchan et al (2017) whereby a male living in the South-East will live to 80.5 years and a female 84.0, whereas in Yorkshire the average age for a male is 78.7 and for a female 82.4. Levels of deprivation have a direct bearing on mortality rates.

## 2.6. Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration (UR) has attempted to tackle poor health and social deprivation by creating policies which aimed to improve the living environment of urban populations. In defining UR, time and place are both significant actors depending upon individual localities. It could be argued that UR is not only reactive as a solution to specific problems as it can also be considered proactive, which means it can be implemented prior to a problem occurring. UR is often a means of rebuilding and reinvesting in areas which require working and living conditions to be improved and modernised (Roberts et al. 2016). According to Roberts & Sykes (2017) UR is defined as:

...comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change’. The term regeneration could also be regarded as economic development (Roberts & Sykes, 2017, p.17).

However, according to Adams et al. (2017) in the UK since the 1980’s UR has placed the emphasis on office space, luxury accommodation, shopping malls and leisure facilities. Property-led urban regeneration (PLUR) has been dominant in policy making in the UK since the 1980’s (Adams et al. 2017, p. 1) cited in (Pendlebury & Porfyriou, 2017). There are many factors which influence UR such as: physical, social, environmental and economic changes which can vary greatly depending upon time and place. It is also considered a reaction/response to ‘urban degeneration’ as urban areas require a variety of services, the primarily housing, security, social interaction, and the purchasing of goods and other amenities (Roberts & Sykes,



2017). UR is a long-term process whereby a variety of problems will be encountered by different generations. Around the UK in towns and cities, there have been policies and plans in place to facilitate the regeneration of urban areas to meet the needs of an 'evolving industrial society' (Roberts & Sykes, 2017, p. 11). There are six principles which are indicative of UR such as: 1) economic analysis; 2) social analysis; 3) Environmental analysis; 4) External drivers of change; 5) Application to an individual urban area; 6) Internal drivers of change (Roberts & Sykes, 2017, p. 20).

However, little publicity is given to the failure of 'property-led regeneration' with cases such as Nottingham Eastside, which for over twenty-five years has had successive developers and investors who have all failed to implement four successive plans which have remained incomplete leaving empty buildings and unoccupied land (Adams et al. 2017, p. 505) cited in (Pendlebury and Porfyriou, 2017). It is common that UR Partnerships used local councils have in the past 'displaced' many low-income communities. In effect this means that the marginalised people in the low-income bracket are oppressed and treated with inequality. To ensure such schemes and plans are a success it is essential that communities are 'engaged with in the early planning stages to identify the social, economic and physical dimensions of such plans' (Gavin & Mooney & Simmie, 2017, p. 816). According to studies, many UR projects are instrumental in the reduction of health inequalities, alongside the socio-economic status of individuals living in urban areas which require regeneration (Maya & Yanez, 2017). In summary, urban regeneration is key in tackling health and social inequalities as it is intended to improve the living conditions for those who work and dwell in urban areas that require investment. However, it seems that in the UK the emphasis has been wrongly placed on building luxury accommodation, shopping malls and leisure facilities. This literature review has highlighted that many of the topics covered are relevant to the case study on Rotherham which has recently been described as 'deprived'. It also highlights several areas for policy changes to tackle the north/south divide. The research questions in this study will address the conclusions formed by the literature review in more depth.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter will first explain the theoretical approach underpinning this research project which is that of interpretivism. In doing so, it will define interpretivism and explain why this approach is appropriate for qualitative research. It will further discuss the rationale for deciding on a qualitative method of enquiry, alongside a description of what qualitative research is, and a discussion on why it is more appropriate than a quantitative method for this study. The researcher's personal reflections will describe the research process of conducting semi-structured interview's along with a discussion around what worked, and what did not, and how this affected the overall research project findings. A description of why the researcher chose semi-structured interviews and what they are, alongside a critique of this method is given. Next, the rationale will be given as to why the researcher selected Rotherham as a case study. Throughout this study, ethical consideration was given to each step of the research process – this will be discussed, alongside why ethics are an essential part of the research process. Finally, the data collected was analysed by using coding and thematic analysis. This process will also be defined and discussed within this chapter.

#### **3.2. Theoretical Stance**

The theoretical perspective utilised in this research project is that of interpretivism. The interpretive epistemology is 'concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action' (Bryman, 2016, p.26). The aim of this approach is to understand human behaviour, as opposed to just explaining it. Max Weber (1947, p.88) 'described sociology as a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects' (Bryman, 2016, p.26). This approach stresses the importance on 'social action as being meaningful to actors and therefore needing to be interpreted from their point of view' (Bryman, 2016, p. 27). When adopting an interpretive stance, the researcher not only explains how society interprets the world, but also how their interpretations fit into a social science framework. Therefore, the researcher 'provides an interpretation of others' interpretations' (Bryman, 2016, p. 28). Working in a reflexive manner means that the researcher can be 'reflective about the implications of their methods, values, biases, and decisions for the knowledge of the social world they generate' (Bryman, 2016, p.

388). Interpretivism allows participants to have their own subjective opinions and understandings of a phenomenon, which allows the researcher to both understand and empathise with them. According to Bogdan & Taylor, (1975) 'The phenomenologist views human behaviour...as a product of how people interpret the world...in order to grasp the meaning of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view' (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 13) The researchers own epistemological and ontological standpoint had a direct influence as to which approach was chosen for this study. When considering the difference between qualitative research and quantitative feminist Oakley (1998) states:

...there is a tendency to create a "gendered hierarchy of knowledge in which quantitative research is represented as objective, hard edged and masculine, whilst qualitative research is subjective, sensitive and feminine" ...Oakley also views..." The apparently sharp opposition between quantitative and qualitative research is a social construct that perpetuates patriarchy cited in (Aldridge & Levine, 2001, p.15).

The rationale for choosing an interpretivist approach is as follows: For many years, the researcher witnessed first-hand that Rotherham was a very patriarchal place to live. This being mainly due to the fact that the majority of those employed in the town were men who worked in heavy industry, whereas, for many women it was common place to stay home to look after the family. However, information from the last census indicates that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century families in Rotherham look very different, mainly because the number of women in employment has risen greatly, although there is still a documented gender pay-gap in the town. The average hourly rate for females is £12.09, whereas, males earn £12.76. Both rates are well below the national averages of females £13.55 and males £14.88 (Office for National Statistics, 2018). The key aim of this study was to produce an understanding, and ultimately to generate knowledge which was deemed relevant to this research project: A case study on Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

### 3.3. Qualitative Research

To undertake a case study on Rotherham it was deemed the most appropriate method of enquiry would be qualitative research. The chosen method enabled the participants to provide their own interpretations on both; possible causes and solutions to the problems which have been faced by the town in recent years.

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is used to answer the 'micro' questions, rather than 'macro' questions which are more concerned with facts and figures, rather than the rich, 'thick' data collected using a qualitative method of enquiry which the researcher can place their

own interpretations on (Flick, 2014). Furthermore, this method is driven by the individual perspectives of those being studied, and the subjective meanings they place upon a phenomenon. The emphasis is placed upon the participants own words and views and the research can take place in a natural setting and can be unstructured (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher becomes involved on a personal level with the participants in order that they are able to view the world through the eyes of their participants (Flick, 2014).

However, a criticism of the qualitative method is that: ‘Some academics would argue that qualitative research can be too ‘impressionistic and subjective’ (Bryman, 2016, p.398). The reason for this is that qualitative research relies upon the researchers own interpretations of what is deemed noteworthy and important, particularly as the researcher may become familiar with their participants. Further criticisms are that qualitative research cannot be generalised as only a small ‘purposive sample’ is used for qualitative interviews, so it could be argued that, the data collected is not representative of the general population. Purposive sampling was used in this study, whereby the participants are not randomly selected. The participants were selected purposefully as being relevant to the research goals and the research questions, (See Appendix 6). Although the sample will vary in ‘terms of key characteristics’ (Bryman, 2016, p.408), the data collected cannot be generalised.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews for this study as this was deemed the most appropriate method of data collection from a sample of local politicians and community workers. Semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews based upon a series of pre-determined questions whereby the participant can freely elaborate on certain points and the interviewer can establish a rapport with the respondent. The advantage of this method of data collection is that it is possible to ‘clarify any problems the person might have in understanding the questions’ (Cozby, 2003, p. 126). Furthermore, it enables the interviewer to ask follow-up questions if any clarification is required. A possible disadvantage of this method is the risk of researcher bias because it is based upon human interactions. The researcher may inadvertently influence the answers to questions using body language, facial expressions etcetera. It is also possible that the interviewer has certain expectations which could enable them to ‘see what they are looking for’ (Cozby, 2003, p. 126). Structured interviews usually have pre-determined questions with specific ‘pre-set response categories’ (Punch, 1998, p. 176). The researcher chose this method, as all the participants are either: residents of Rotherham or were born in the town and they were all *au fait* with both the past and ongoing problems faced by the town and its people.

The recruitment process proved difficult as many of the participants who were invited to take part in this study, were either too busy due to time constraints, workloads or they did not respond at all. It was important that the researcher built up a rapport with her participants, in order that the data collected was as natural as possible. Moreover, it helped the participants to be frank and honest with their responses. Some of the interviews proved more difficult than others so the researcher had to adopt a slightly different approach dependent upon who was being interviewed (this will be discussed further in the reflections section 3.4). In retrospect, the choice of the setting for the interviews was extremely important, in order that the interviews could be recorded without interruptions or background noise, this proved challenging because many of the interviews took place in the participant's places of work.

### 3.4. Reflections as a Researcher

Initially, the researcher approached approximately twenty-five people to participate in this study. Most of the target sample were mainly politicians, civil servants and community workers. Many invitations did not receive a response and a high number of those that did, stated that they could not spare the time due to work commitments and time constraints. As a result, the number of participants used for this study in total was ten, which included 4 males and 6 females. A description of the participants' age, gender, ethnicity and occupation can be found in Appendix 9. Initially, the number of responses was disappointing, and it proved more difficult than anticipated to recruit participants. The researcher found this hard to comprehend as she had pre-empted that more people would be willing to participate in her study. This also meant that the sample was not as representative of the town's population, particularly in terms of diverse ethnicities as she would have liked. For this study the pseudonyms of the participants are initials A-J.

Following a letter of invitation being sent to Participant A (See Appendix 3) a response was given which commented how important and interesting the study was, however, the respondent could only find the time to answer 2 questions as it was felt that some of the questions were worthy of an essay in their own right. The researcher was surprised by this response, particularly since Participant A's views and opinions were highly anticipated and valued. The researcher selected 2 questions which were subsequently answered via email.

The research process began tentatively, and the researchers' own personal anxieties meant that the first interview proved very stressful. An office setting was agreed with Participant B as our venue to hold our interview. Mid-way through the interview a drum session began in an

adjacent room. As a result, we suspended the interview and relocated to another room in a quieter area. The interview was much longer than anticipated as the participant spoke at length about his life living in Rotherham. The subsequent interview was held in a bar and there were several background noises which were picked up on the recording which made the transcribing of the interview difficult. The interview with Participant C was much shorter than the previous one as the responses given were much more direct and less descriptive.

The following two interviews with Participants D & E were held in a community centre in an area of town which was unfamiliar to the researcher. Extra care was taken to ensure the researchers personal safety and several calls were made to a third party before, and immediately after the interviews. Both of these interviews were much more relaxed than the previous ones and the conversations flowed naturally, and the responses were varied and interesting, this gave the researcher more confidence when approaching subsequent interviews. However, the final interview in the research process was by far the most intimidating as it was with a prominent politician. The time allotted was precisely one hour, which meant that the researcher was ever conscious of the time. Unfortunately, an error was made during the recording and consequently the response to Question 1 was omitted from the recording. The researcher found this interview quite daunting and nerve wracking because she had placed a great deal of gravitas on this interview. The data collected was rich in detail and the interview and the researcher considered it a great success.

The researcher found that transcribing the interviews to be a laborious and tedious process as both her typing skills and speed are not that proficient. Also, listening to one's own voice on the recordings can be difficult and the researcher found this extremely hard. In retrospect, there are several things the researcher would do differently when undertaking a qualitative method of enquiry, this includes: adopting a more persistent approach to the recruitment process, thoroughly research the interview venues, practice with recording equipment. Also, on a personal note the researcher would practice her interview techniques in order that she become more confident in her approach.

### 3.5. Why Rotherham?

The rationale and motivation for selecting Rotherham as a case study includes: the researcher was born in the town and having lived in the town all her life she has observed first-hand its deterioration since the eighties, alongside the breakdown in community cohesion between residents of different ethnicities since the publishing of both the Jay Report (2014) and the

Casey Report (2015). Since both the reports described the perpetrators as being of Pakistani heritage, the Asian community have been targeted by several far-right groups who have demonstrated in the town. Also, there has been a significant rise in hate crimes in the town (Tell Mama, 2018). The researcher has also observed first-hand that for many years the opportunities for working class people living in the town have been limited. Moreover, the life chances of those born in Rotherham are well below the national average. Rotherham has recently been described as having 'deprived' areas and it is reported that 1 in 3 children in the town are living in poverty (End Child Poverty, 2018). All these factors are the reason behind the undertaking of this study. The researcher believes that Rotherham is a great place to live and it is full of lovely people who lack direction and aspirations. There is an air of despondence in the town, but with investment and better education opportunities the researcher is hopeful that the town can rebuild itself and its reputation.

### 3.6. Ethics

Following the submission of a research proposal ethical consideration was given to this research project from the outset. In the UK, funding bodies, such as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have established 'ethical frameworks' which have led to the establishment of ethics panels within universities (Wiles, 2008, p. 24). In line with this framework, an ethics form was submitted to the University of Huddersfield's ethics committee (See Appendix 1), and ethical approval was subsequently given. Copies of the letter of invitation (See Appendix 3), alongside an information sheet (See Appendix 4), a copy of a consent form (See Appendix 5) and a list of the research questions (See Appendix 6) were also submitted to the ethics panel for approval.

Ethics are an essential part of the research process; therefore, thorough consideration was given to ethical guidelines throughout this study by adhering to the code of ethics set out by the British Sociological Association (2002). Furthermore, it is important to place the emphasis upon both the participants and researcher's well-being; hence, a risk assessment was also completed (See Appendix 2) to protect the researcher whilst working 'in the field'. A consent form (See Appendix 5) was given to the participants prior to the interview which explained: their participation was voluntary, and the data collected would remain confidential and anonymous. The consent form further explained that the participants had a right to withdraw from the study at any given time. Following the data collection, it was highlighted that the data would be stored safely on a computer which is encrypted, or that any paper-based data and

field notes would be stored safely within the university, in accordance with (Data Protection Regulations, 2018).

### 3.7. Analysis-Process

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis which is a frequently used method when conducting qualitative research. This method of analysis is described as: ‘An independent qualitative, descriptive approach which is mainly described as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within the data’ (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p.13). Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to analyse the collected data using a variety of methods. Initially, a coding system was used via a process of indexing. Themes began to emerge whilst reading and re-reading the transcripts and field notes. To develop the identified codes several different stages were considered throughout the transcribing process which enabled the researcher to identify regularities, patterns and themes within the data. Further key themes began to emerge when the researcher built upon the identified codes, these themes were placed in a table prior to analysis, and the process is illustrated in Appendix 8. Initially, ten themes, and sub-themes were identified at this stage, however, after further analysis they were reduced to 6 key themes and then reduced further to 4 themes which were used in the findings chapter of this study, which are as follows:

1. The importance of education.
2. Implications of class and culture.
3. Raising aspirations and sustaining social mobility
4. Rebuilding communities & Place: Rotherham.

The researcher was processing the data and theorising much of what she had heard during the transcription process, in doing so, she then placed her own interpretations upon the data (Bryman, 2016). A criticism of this method is that it could be argued that the context may be lost when a statement is made in a specific setting (Bryman, 2016). Similarly, Coffey & Atkinson state:

‘Our interview informants may tell us long and complicated accounts and reminiscences. When we chop them up into separate coded segments, we are in danger of losing the sense that they are accounts. We lose sight, if we are not careful, of the fact that that they are often couched in terms of stories-as narratives-or that they have other formal properties in terms of their discourse structure. Segmenting and coding may be an important, even indispensable, part of the research process, but it is not the whole story (1996:52). Cited in (Punch, 1999, p.222).



### 3.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the theoretical stance of the researcher which is that of interpretivism and given reasons for choosing this approach. It was further discussed why a qualitative research method was chosen, and why it was most appropriate for this study, criticisms of this method were also given. The data collection was by way of semi-structured interviews which were both defined and critiqued. The reflections section gave an insight in to the way the interviews were approached, alongside how the researcher felt about the whole process. In section 3.1.5 the rationale was given as to why the researcher chose Rotherham as a case study. The following section discussed the ethical considerations given to this study and how ethics are an essential part of the research process. Furthermore, it described the process of submitting an ethics form and receiving ethical approval from the University of Huddersfield. The final section, discussed the analysis process and how the key themes were identified, coded and then transferred to a table in order that the themes were easier to identify and further reduce to the final four themes, a critique was also given of this process.

## Chapter 4.

### Findings and Analysis

Chapter 4 will present the key themes which emerged from the thematic analysis of the data collected in this study, which are as follows: Importance of education; Raising aspirations and sustaining social mobility; Rebuilding a sense of community and place: regeneration of Rotherham; Implications of class and culture.

#### 4.1. Importance of Education

Education is compulsory for children aged between 4 and 18 in the UK, it is also a topic that successive governments have tried to update and improve. Academics, particularly in the field of social sciences have also analysed and discussed the education system over the past century. It is widely understood that '*children are born illiterate and innumerate, and ignorant of the norms and cultural achievements of the community or society in which they have been thrust*' (Phillips, Seagal & Harvey, 2015, p. 1). It is believed that both teachers and families alike have a role to play in assisting children to learn to read and write, calculate and how to socialize in an acceptable manner appropriate to their particular culture (Phillips, et al, 2015).

Education is compulsory in the Western world for all children aged between 5 and 16, and in some countries until the age of 18. However, some parents may choose to home school their children with support from their education authorities, whilst others may choose to pay privately for their children's education, but for most children attending a state school is the norm, particularly in the UK which is relevant to this study. A key role of education is to assist children to develop whilst allowing for their individual needs. Education is also acknowledged as being a key part of socialization for children in order that they can participate in society.

All human societies, past and present, have had a vested interest in education; and some wits have claimed that teaching (at its best an educational activity) is the second oldest profession. While not all societies channel sufficient resources into support for educational activities and institutions, all at the very least acknowledge their centrality... (Phillips et al, 2015, p. 1).

Historically education was delivered by church schools, as well as workhouses who educated poor children. However, the middle and upper classes could afford to pay for their children to be educated, usually their male offspring. In 1870, the Elementary Education Act meant that children aged between 5 and 13 years old could access an education. In 1918 the leaving age was raised to age 14. In 1944 education became compulsory and free, and the leaving was

raised again to 15 years old. The leaving age was subsequently raised again to 16 years old, alongside the introduction of the national curriculum (Trowler, 2003).

Biesta (2015) suggests that there are three dimensions to education: qualification; socialisation; and subjectification. Qualification is connected to communication and the gaining of knowledge, by way of qualifications. It is regarded that this phase prepares children for participation within society. Furthermore, education teaches and initiates children into the different traditions, which may be cultural, political or religious, this is the socialisation phase. Research suggests that this phase works in an invisible way to perpetuate divisions and inequalities. Finally, education can be either a positive or negative experience for children, this is the subjectification phase which enables children to become subjects who are able to take the initiative, and responsibility for their actions, rather than being objects who are directed and steered by others (Biesta, 2010). Both politicians and academics would agree that children from the lower classes are disadvantaged from early on in their educational experience. This was illustrated by Participant A, who stated:

*Social class impacts hugely on an individual's educational achievement and employment opportunities. Children from working class backgrounds are frequently out performed by children from middle class backgrounds, despite a similar range of ability being displayed across all social classes*

Likewise, Participant B said, '*Education is the key to everything*'. Similarly, Participant C went on to say '*...a lot more needs to be invested in the education system. I think there needs to be a level playing field so that we can enjoy education and so everyone has the same access to resources*'. When asked the question is the educational system in this country still elitist? Participant A responded '*Institutional barriers to educational achievement for children from working class backgrounds have far reaching consequences. As policy makers, it is essential that we ensure that all children, whatever their background, are able to reach their full potential*'. Furthermore, it was thought that succeeding within the education system alone is insufficient, Participant F said: '*I think education is fundamental. Just doing well in education on its own is not enough, you still need access to certain networks and places and having life experiences that we can't replicate*'. It was identified as a common theme by all the participants that: working class children have to strive harder in order to succeed, their restricted access to resources was believed to be a key factor. Also, a lack of social and cultural capital often places working class children in a disadvantaged position. This point is further illustrated by Phillips et al, (2015, p. 20), who state that:

...education also serves as a social-sorting mechanism and undoubtedly has enormous impact on the economic fate of the individual. Put more abstractly, at its best education equips individuals with the skills and substantive knowledge that allows them to define and to pursue their own goals, and also allows them to participate in the life of their community as full-fledged, autonomous citizens.

In his classic book *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey (1916, p.3) stated ‘... in its broadest sense education is the means of the “social continuity of life”’. Furthermore, Dewey pointed out that the:

Primary ineluctable facts of the birth and death of each one of the constituent members in a social group make education a necessity, for despite this biological inevitability the life of the group goes on (Phillips et al, 2015, p. 20).

The findings in this section concur with those in Chapter 2, whereby both state that education is the key to success, more so for working class children, who it is widely agreed do not start on a level playing field with those from middle and upper-class backgrounds. Academic Professor Diane Reay (2017) believes that schooling is elitist, and that education perpetuates a class divide. Similarly, other academics such as Green et al (2014) believe that the inequality within the education system is perpetuated into inequality of opportunities within the workforce. Particularly, in places like the Midlands and Northern England, where unemployment has remained high for many years, as slowly all the major industries have disappeared. There are obvious similarities between the literature in Chapter 2 and the data collected in this study, in as much as it is dependent on whereabouts in the country you live, alongside your family’s economic status as to the quality of education received. This undoubtedly has a bearing on an individual’s educational experiences and achievements. Furthermore, it was highlighted that educational achievement, or lack of can have an impact upon an individual’s health and general well-being.

#### 4.2. Implications of Class and Culture

This study has established that class has implications on every facet of our lives. The population of Rotherham is predominantly working class, with some areas being described as deprived and the residents in these areas termed the underclass. However, some participants in this study believe there is an emerging lower middle class and that the differences between the different classes are less obvious. This is demonstrated in a quote by Participant I who stated, *‘I think the class system does still exist, but the lines between the different classes are now blurred more than in the post war period’*. Likewise, Participant F stated: *‘In Rotherham we are predominantly working class, but without a doubt we have a growing lower middle class but*

*with a working-class mentality*'. Furthermore, Participant F went on to say: *'The truth is, the way they think and the way they are is still working class. I think that's the nebulous nature of class today in places like Rotherham. It's a bit confused and not clear cut'*. When asked to describe the class of the people of Rotherham Participant B stated: *'Rotherham is a very working-class town, that's why the people are so nice'*. He went on to say, *'There is an upper class and upper middle class who look after their own interests and really centre on the Conservative party and the government'*. Similarly, Participant C said: *'It does not benefit the Conservative government to invest in working class areas because they don't get the vote from these areas and don't make money from them'*.

Whilst discussing class and how it might affect one's life chances, Participant F who is of Kashmiri heritage stated: *'Class has an implication on everything, how you act, how you talk, how you liaise with individuals. What makes me stand out is that I have cultural differences as well as class differences'* Participant F said the intersectionality of her class and ethnicity has meant that she has had to work much harder to succeed, but her parents always encouraged her and pushed her to become successful. However, this is not the case for many working-class children as illustrated by Participant C who agrees *'Someone's social class affects every area of life'*. But, he went on to say:

*'I feel strongly that a lot of working class parents, although they say they want better for their children they still have the mentality of-don't look above your station or try to achieve too much or you will be knocked down. They never want to see their children fail so they set limits. They want them to do well but also to remember their working-class roots'*

Participant G believes that: *'working class people are not taught to demand equality'*. She went on to say, *'It's a significant problem that class is not one the protected characteristics of the Equality Act'*. Similarly, in Chapter 2 it was highlighted that some sociologists would argue that 'class' is more rigid, which leads to 'discrimination and prejudice' (Rubin et al. 2014, p.197). Similarly, Bourdieu (1984) stated: class is just an amalgamation of capitals which are then used to dominate others with less capital (Savage, 2016).

In contrast, other academics argue that 'social class and socio-economic status is based upon the social, cultural and economic upbringing of an individual' (Rubin et al, 2014, p.196). Similar to comments made by Participants I & E, Rubin et al (2014) agree that a working-class person can indeed benefit from meritocracy and go on to gain a professional career, however, they will still remain working class.

It was also highlighted in this study that in Rotherham recent events such as the publishing of the Jay Report (2014) & the Casey Report (2015) have caused a breakdown between the existing communities, particularly communities with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. There is an obvious division between the different ethnicities and Participant I stated:

*'The racial tensions brought about by the grooming scandal and the distrust some residents have around all immigrants and their perceived abuse of the system that makes life harder for local born residents, this is heightened by national racist gangs holding demonstrations, and continued poor media coverage, this affects the community cohesion'*

Similarly, Participant J agreed that: *'...the community needs to come together, I see that myself when I come back. You know it does feel quite separate'*. She went on to say: *'People have very different lives and cultures, but they have a lot in common too...in the schools where their children go, the key is to build from that and look at what we all have in common'*. According to Participant F, *'within the Asian communities there is already a great deal of networking which can be advantageous'*, this was illustrated in the following quote:

*...that's the difference with Asian culture, there is something that binds us together, even though we are all from different income brackets and have completely different work lives, but something still glues us together. This wouldn't be replicated in your culture. The idea of using culture to redefine our identity. The idea I was pushing was about cultural democracy, what does that mean for a place like Rotherham? A Red Pepper article inspired me and I was in the early stages of research and now my work has someone else's name on it'*

Furthermore, Participant F went on to state:

*'I think the issue of diversity and ethnic differences has its own implications, inspiring but limited implications. An example is Canklow, of the most deprived areas not only in this town but in the country and the growing refugee families and asylum seekers. In the twelve years they have lived here there is very little social mobility for those living in Canklow. This community have come from war torn areas, from a different kind of poverty. However, they can still be inspired, they are getting involved in this and that and care about their community. They lap up every opportunity because culture can also help you to become inspired to want something better for yourself. They take the opportunities that many residents who have lived there for years don't. They expect to get somewhere better in their lives, I feel culturally that's where others are missing out'*

According to the data collected, the minority groups of varying ethnic backgrounds have cultural connections which support, encourage and inspire their children to not only network but to achieve more in life. When asked the question: What are the key challenges now facing Rotherham? Participant E said:

*Getting over the stigma, trying to unite all the different faiths and races, because it goes beyond that, it's not just about the Asian community. It's the fact that the Asians won't speak to the Slovaks, the Slovaks won't speak to the Czech people. It's hard because they all have different cultures and instead of respecting each other's cultures we have a sort of...They are all frightened of each other'.*

It is evident from the data, that minority groups of varying ethnic backgrounds have cultural connections which support, encourage and inspire their children to not only network but to achieve more in life. It was further suggested that a possible solution to the segregation in the town would be for the different communities to look at each other's cultural practices, as it is obvious there are lessons to be learned from each other by all the different communities. In Chapter 2, Savage (2016) suggests that an effective way of gathering social and cultural capital is via social ties like faith, unions or hobbies.

#### 4.3. Raising Aspirations and Sustaining Social Mobility

Raising one's aspirations is widely understood as setting positive goals and ultimately working towards achieving them in any area of one's life, whereas, a lack of aspirations could be viewed as a sign of inequality. A definition of aspirations given by Colman (2015, p. 57) is: '... a hope, desire, or ambition to achieve a specified goal'. Whereas, according to Chivers (2017, p. 116) 'An aspiration is defined by the relative weights we attach to the overall probability of success and failure for a desired objective' Furthermore, in recent times there has been a great emphasis placed upon 'the role of aspirations in the creation and persistence of poverty traps' (Chivers, 2017, p. 116). Moreover, aspirations may be affected by an individual's economic status, or according to Ray and Robinson (2012) '...by parents' aspirations for their children's education' cited in (Chivers, 2017, p. 116). As the quote below demonstrates, when individuals are born into a given social class, it is argued that their own social and cultural experiences will undoubtedly have a direct influence on their life chances:

'The position within social space an individual occupies will affect objective issues such as life chances and experience, but position will also affect levels of aspirations and expectations, what Bourdieu refers to as the 'field of the possibles'' (1984, p. 110) (Thatcher, Ingram, Burke & Abrahams, 2016 (Eds).

Both the major political parties in the UK, (Conservative & Labour) agree upon the importance of raising young people's aspirations, particularly those from 'non-traditional backgrounds' which would enable them to gain entry to the best universities, which in turn would lead them to better career options (Scandone, 2018). Likewise, Scandone (2018) states it is apparent that:

'Young people's aspirations have occupied, since the turn of the century, centre stage in a broad range of policy initiatives aimed at bridging the 'achievement gap' among students from different socio-economic backgrounds, widening participation in higher education, and improving social mobility outcomes' (BIS, 2014, 2015; DfES, 2003; HEFCE, 2010) cited (Scandone, 2018, p.520).

One key factor to consider, which was raised by several participants in this study, was that the parents of children from lower social classes have low expectations for their children, which in

turn leads to them lack any aspirations for themselves. Furthermore, it was felt that Rotherham has been discriminated against since the Jay Report (2014) which highlighted a large-scale grooming scandal in the town, resulting in many far-right demonstrations and negative publicity for the town. It was also highlighted that cuts to school budgets, and the high cost of university tuition fees have created a lack of aspiration from the town's young people. It was further suggested, that travel broadens one's horizons in terms of cultural capital, which could raise an individual's aspirations. Finally, a key notion was to involve local entrepreneurs as positive role models, and that local businesses liaise more with the education system. Also, it was suggested that including and informing parents more in their children's education, in order that they are made aware of their children's future career and study options.

As a result of analysing the data collected for this study, it was suggested that raising the aspirations of working-class children living in Rotherham is key to both their life chances and their social mobility. Whilst discussing the 'raising of aspirations' in Rotherham, Participant B stated:

*I have seen the lowering of aspirations and the battering of people's aspirations in places like Rotherham, people who have been discriminated against by successive governments and they have had the stuffing kicked out of them.*

Furthermore, Participant A stated that '*It is clear that other factors such as low expectations, low aspirations or economic issues play a part in determining achievement*'. Similarly, Participant B agreed that '*the struggle to raise aspirations in people is a normality*'. Participant B went on further to say:

*...the bringing in of tuition fees, the cutting of budgets to schools is closing down the aspirations, closing down the sense of 'we can achieve' is the biggest problem'. 'If you treat people in a way that encourages them to aspire, to dream, then you know...anyway it's about giving people the ability to dream and to fulfil their dreams.*

Another key theme which emerged during the analysis process was the notion that: '*Parents need to raise their aspirations for their children*'. It was pointed out by Participant G that: '*There is a lot in the news at the moment about Amanda Spielman (OFSTEDS Chief Inspector) saying that working class kids lack aspiration, but I think we lack hope-and maybe a bit of vision*'. Whereas, Participant I stated: '*I think people need to travel to experience other areas and also to break the mind-set that your life is mapped out for you, I believe that seeing more aspirational areas gives you the drive to progress in your life*'. A further solution offered by Participant I was to: '*... develop a programme through school education to promote mobility through using practical examples of entrepreneurs who have come from lower social class*



*backgrounds in order to raise* As illustrated in the above statement by Participant I it is apparent that: *‘Institutions and practitioners involved with education and skills training appear therefore to have a substantial responsibility, both in enabling young people’s ‘capability to aspire’ and in increasing their ‘capability to realise aspirations’ (Baillergeau et al., 2015; Hart, 2013) cited in (Scandone, 2018).*

Furthermore, it was suggested by Participant I that businesses play a greater role in raising the aspirations of young people, a sentiment echoed by Participant J who agreed that:

*...businesses helping kids have a sense of aspiration and then they will come in fired up and knowing what they want to do. It’s about helping parents, and how they help their own kids. Maybe giving them a clearer sense of just how well their children can do’*

It is evident that most of the participants in this study would agree that parents have a huge role to play in their children’s futures, by raising their own aspirations, in order that their children have opportunities to achieve their goals, whatever they may be. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the absence of economic capital, can in some cases limit social capital, which undoubtedly affects the life chances of some individuals. Furthermore, it was pointed out that those who live in poverty, mainly the unemployed, those who suffer poor health and disabilities and those in low paid jobs are more likely to suffer food/fuel poverty, live risky or harmful lifestyles (E.g. alcohol, tobacco, drugs) will have a total lack of aspiration (Rotherham Together Partnership Plan, 2016/17).

Poverty of aspirations is a theory which essentially places blame upon parents rather than on the government’s policies or the education system. According to the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR, 2017) aspirations have been a significant influence on education policy and are viewed as being essential to close the attainment gap amongst children of different socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, according to the recent CRFR (2017) report there is evidence to suggest that children who come from poorer backgrounds ‘do have high aspirations for themselves’ (Treanor, 2017, p. 1). Although, the types of jobs they aspire to do are inherently ‘gendered’ dependent upon their own familiarity and understanding, jobs such as hairdressing or mechanics. In other words, *‘aspirations expressed by young people reflect the expectations and constraints inherent within their setting, rather than a free choice of desired outcome’* (Treanor, 2017, p. 1). The report goes on to say that even the poorest communities do aspire, however, what they do not have is an understanding of how to set goals which are achievable. The report concludes that *‘there is no crisis in aspirations but rather difficulty for poor parents to sustain those aspirations over time or turn them into reality’*

(Treanor, 2017, p.1). Often parents of children from the poorest backgrounds do have aspirations for their children, but they feel they lack the know-how, understanding and capability, to help educate their children at home. This highlights the importance of education, particularly parental involvement on any level.

Social mobility has been a much-used term in the UK since the 1950's, and definitions and understandings can vary greatly from one person to another. It has been described as 'the differences in social achievement according to social background. When taken in this restricted sense, social immobility can also be called inequality of social opportunity' (ISO) (Boudon, 1974, p. 31). On the other hand, the Nuffield School define social mobility as 'movement between occupational categories across generations' (Brown, 2013, p. 679). Absolute social mobility is the most common understanding of the term, whereby an individual can move up or down the social scale between different classes. Participant I stated: *'The term social mobility to me means being born in to one social class but through different factors being able to transfer from one class to another'*. Likewise, Participant F stated:

*I think it applies more generally to people who are moving from a lower income bracket or experience bracket and they are able to travel along those strata, not just of class but also in terms of culture and lots of other things. I don't just think it's about money.*

However, relative social mobility is a term which highlights the inequalities and lack of opportunities open to children who are born working class (Brown, 2013). This point was illustrated by Participant A, who stated:

*Those from working class backgrounds are more likely to be employed in low paid, unstable sectors. As a result, social mobility can be extremely challenging. However, I do not believe that income is the sole factor, along with many others, including prejudice, conspire to limit social mobility.*

Most of the participants interviewed in this study agreed that a social divide still exists in the UK today. Fifty per cent of the participants had a positive view of the term social mobility, whereas others held a very negative view of the term. Participant G who said:

*I hate this term, it was invented to stop us talking about class. If you deconstruct it, it rests on the assumption that we all want to be middle class. It only works one way! A posh person on the street is still a posh person.*

In agreement, Participant C stated, *'I struggle with the words social mobility'*. He went to say:

*I see social mobility as a negative thing. It's sort of saying we should all want to move out of whatever social class or position we are in. I think people should be proud of where they are on the social ladder. Pitting people against each other is a way of keeping people under control...*

On the other hand, Participant H said, *'I see it as a positive term, one which suggests that individuals can be anything they want to be'*. It was suggested by Participant B that *'social*

*mobility should be about creating work, and a workforce who feel fulfilled and are valued in what they do*'. Likewise, Participant J stated: *'I would like to see the government have social mobility at its heart. You then work back from that and say how does that drive policy?* It was suggested that the term social mobility can be viewed as being subjective, because it has many different meanings for individuals, dependent upon personal economic circumstances, also whereabouts in the country you live. This was illustrated by Participant J who stated:

*For me it's about where you start, not defining where you get to. Also, it's about recognising that success for different people varies. I think it's more about getting to where you want to, and not having barriers unnecessarily in place so it's your decision how far you go, not someone else's*'.

Although successive governments have promised to promote social mobility, there has been little success in this area. When asked how institutions can promote social mobility? Participant I stated that

*Institutions do encourage social mobility through equality policies, the problem is how those policies are enacted and monitored. Most institutions suffer from transparency issues and tend to hide behind commercial sensitivity disclosures when it comes to requests for this kind of information, I think the way to encourage them to be more open would be to include them more in the mentoring of children from a school age.*

Furthermore, Participant I went on to say that:

*Promotion of social mobility would have a lot of impact on inequality in British society this could take the form of lower/working class/immigrants/females making it into the board rooms of industry where they could challenge some of the 'norms' as well as helping to break down some of the barriers that create inequality. This is something that could be replicated in politics, legal and various other systems that are still seen to be run by the 'elite'*

Whereas, Participant J pointed out that:

*The problem with social mobility is that whilst ever you have got this points system if you like that looks at results across the board. If you are a kid that's gone to a college or sixth form that the teachers weren't universally brilliant and advice on which exams to do, then that does disadvantage you.*

It is evident, from both the literature review and from the data collected for this study that social mobility was possible in the UK in the post-World War 2 period. However, many academics agree that while ever social inequalities still exist in 21<sup>st</sup> century UK, then social mobility will prove more difficult. On the other hand, the report by the Social Mobility Commission (2017) states that the biggest divide is between London and the rest of the country. Contrary to the findings from this study, the report states that 'there is no direct correlation between the affluence of an area and social mobility' (Social Mobility Commission, 2017).

#### 4.4. Rebuilding Communities and Place: Regeneration of Rotherham

This study has highlighted the fact that in Rotherham recent events such as the publishing of the Jay Report (2014) & the Casey Report (2015) have caused a breakdown between the existing communities, particularly communities with a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Following the publishing of the reports it has been well documented that there were many demonstrations held in the town by far-right fascist groups. Since 2012, there have been sixteen protests by groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) and Britain First at a cost of around £4 million (BBC News, 2017). Many of the participants in this study agreed that for the town to rebuild and regenerate, bringing back a sense of community to the town is imperative. There are many definitions of the term community which can vary across both time and space. Elias (1974, p. 1) defined community as:

The term community can refer to villages with some characteristics of state in relatively undifferentiated agrarian societies. It can refer to a backwater village of a more or less urbanized nation state. It can be used with reference to suburban community, a neighbourhood region or an ethnic minority of a large industrial city **cited in** (Cooke, Halsall & Wankhade, 2015, p.8).

Whereas, Bauman (2001, p.1) believed that the word '*community*' promoted a positive notion, in fact many would regard the term as a '*good thing*' (Cook et al, 2015, p.8). Community is at the heart of this research project and many participants felt that in Rotherham, it has become evident that the different communities have become fragmented and segregated, particularly between residents of different ethnicities or heritage backgrounds. The term 'community' is viewed as a broad ranging notion which can be attributed to many different facets of 'social life' given the setting, place and time. The term can also cover a variety of areas such as: 'housing, locality, urbanization, citizenship, family, work, employment, relationships and so forth' (O'Connor & Goodwin (2012, p. 477).

Whilst discussing the problems that have occurred in Rotherham, Participant B stated '*The level of community cohesion has gone down in the thirty years I have lived here. There is more alienation among the ethnic minorities*' Participant C who works within the community suggested that to address the community cohesion problem in Rotherham: '*There needs to be more funding available to work with community groups and to engage with communities, so they work together and share each other's visions*'.

When asked about ideas and solutions on: How to bring together the segregated communities living in Rotherham, Participant B suggested: '*Interweaving and working on friendships, that's how to build communities*' Whereas, Participant E (a community worker) gave an opinion on how to rebuild a sense of community stating '*We are employed to help individuals get off their*

*backsides and improve their own social well-being, their communities and their lives basically. We give them the tools but it's more about empowerment, so they will help themselves'.*

The people of Rotherham are faced with the question, how do they rebuild, and redevelop their sense of community? Winter (2000, p.9) would argue that: 'social capital is the most fundamental resource a community requires in the creation of economic, social and political wellbeing' (Cook et al, 2015, p. 7). Likewise, Putnam (1995b, p. 67) defines social capital as: 'a feature of social life-networks, norms and trust-that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Cook et al, 2025, p. 7). Furthermore, Putnam (2000, p.290) stated that: 'social capital makes us smarter, safer, richer and better able to govern a just and stable democracy'. As well as a divide between the different ethnic communities in Rotherham, Participant E stated that: *'Within small communities there is a divide between the classes. There's no longer a sense of community'*. It is evident that for Rotherham community development is key, to rebuild trust between the different communities. Phillips & Pittman (2009, p. 6) defines community development as: 'A process developing and enhancing the ability to act collectively, and an outcome taking collective action and; the result of the action for improvement in a community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic etc.' cited in (Cook et al, 2015, p. 9). It was pointed out in Chapter 2 that community development, much like urban regeneration requires the participation of all the community, particularly low-income families whose opinions are often disregarded and consequently these communities are left feeling alienated. It was further suggested that the way forward was to include and engage with communities in the lower income bracket to prevent inequality and marginalization. Similarly, the data collected in this study suggests that to rebuild and regenerate communities, open discussions need to take place between all the residents of Rotherham, so that together they can build friendships and trust.

Throughout this study, it has been highlighted that Rotherham lacks community cohesion and needs regeneration to move forward. When asked about the problems faced by Rotherham, Participant E stated, *'Rotherham is broken'*. She went on to say:

*People look at the town and just see the town centre. They think it's a tiny place so why can't you fix yourselves? It's actually a large town which is widely spread out into districts. The rural side is massive alongside the urban side of the town. It's about knitting the two together.*

Likewise, Participant D stated: *'Rotherham is classed as a deprived area in Yorkshire and that is evidenced'*. Furthermore, he went on to say:

*I think the main problem is there are a lot of good people in Rotherham, it's just the things that have happened and the prejudice that is faced, particularly since the 'scandal' and everything in the news. Once there's a bad reputation on the town it's always a focus on the bad not the good.*

Whilst discussing the town centre Participant E said: *'The town centre is dead. People don't want to go there because they are frightened. It looks down and dingy, if it was cleaned up it would be great but it's not a place people want to be'.*

It was highlighted in Chapter 2, that since the 1980's, urban regeneration has been primarily focused around building luxury accommodation, shops, offices and leisure facilities. Whereas, towns such as Rotherham need more social housing, affordable housing and the retraining of the workforce to accommodate the new technology-based companies. Moya and Yanez (2017) argue that urban regeneration projects should aim to reduce health inequalities and boost the economic status of the people who live in these areas. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), (2017) Rotherham is well below the national average with regards to employment and health inequalities, the percentage of workless households is 17.5% compared to the national average 14.5% and those who are long term sick is 28.1% compared to the national average 22.1%

There are many key challenges facing Rotherham, some of which were highlighted by this quote from Participant G who argues the challenges are: *'political corruption and hateful race politics which I still don't think anyone has got to the bottom of. Also, town planning completely lacks vision'.* Participant H agreed and said: *'I don't think that things have really changed here in terms of race politics and child sexual exploitation. We all knew that everyone knew'*

Participant E asked if I was aware of the 2025 plan and went on to say: *'The town is going to be under regeneration. The tram is going to run through the town, there are plans to build more hotels and their vision is make it more Parisienne, not sure how?'* Furthermore, she said: *'There is also a theme park being built, Maclaren have come to take over the old air field, and Tinsley is being re-built. They (the council) have a vision for the town'*

The Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) has extensive plans in place in their *'The Rotherham Plan, A new perspective 2025'*. RTP was formed in 2015, and 'has 28 members who represent the council, other public bodies, the voluntary, community and faith sectors, local businesses and the Sheffield universities' (RTP, 2018, p. 4).

The table below illustrates the partnership and its strategy.

The Rotherham Plan: Rotherham Together Partnership	
Economic Growth Plan 2015-25	Business Growth Board
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-18	Health and Wellbeing Board
Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19	Children and Young People's Partnership
Safer Rotherham Plan 2016-19	Safer Rotherham Partnership
Building Stronger Families Forum	

Table 4.1. Source: (The Rotherham Plan, 2018)

The vision of the Rotherham Together Partnership (2018) is to make Rotherham ‘a place where people want to live, work, study, invest or visit’ (p. 8). Their overall plan is to ensure that: ‘Rotherham people have equal access to opportunities, activities and services. Also, to create stronger communities where people want to raise their families and grow old’ (p. 8). In RTP (2018) research by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates ‘the importance of children getting “a good start” to have the best chance of having positive outcomes in education, health and other important areas of life’ (RTP, 2018, p. 8).

When asked the question: why should the private sector invest in Rotherham? participant G responded: *‘Rather than big business and PFI exploiting the town I’d love to see Rotherham re-imagine itself as a small enterprise/fair trade etc. town, something with a new economic/political model like Ludlow or Frome’* Whereas, Participant H said *‘I think it might be hard to get ethical businesses to invest in an area which has a reputation for corruption’*. Participant E suggested that the reason the private sector should invest in the town is that: *‘we have untapped potential and basically, we are cheaper, accessible and well-connected in terms of our infrastructure which has remained untapped’*. She went on to say: *‘If you give qualified people work so they don’t leave Rotherham and they maintain their family networks here for things like childcare it all has a knock-on effect and businesses would benefit from having happy employees’*. In response to the same question: Why the private sector should invest in the town? Participant C went on to say: *‘If the private sector invested in Rotherham they would reap the benefits of the fact that strong working-class communities can achieve anything and produce anything. Also, if you invest in them they will give back to their communities’*. In contrast, Participant B stated: *‘I have very little time for the private sector, because they are about profit and not about serving our local community’*. Likewise, Participant G stated: *‘The*

fact is that even the public sector, never mind education, is pretty much the preserve of middle-class people, particularly at the higher levels of hierarchy'. Likewise, Participant C said:

*There is some great work being done in Rotherham, some real investment. When you talk to people who are investing they are saying that it's an exciting time. However, the people who live in the town should be the ones who are excited, but they are fighting against the barriers they are facing. People from outside come here and are excited at what's happening here.*

When asked the question: Do you think the past reputation of Rotherham put off private investors? Participant B responded: *Yes, I do, it's terribly sad because Rotherham has been inhabited for over 800 years it's one of the oldest mapped towns in the country'* He went to say: *'...there is a fantastic history to Rotherham that's very rich and full. It's just a lovely place surrounded by countryside'*. In contrast, Participant J, she said:

*'No not at all. I think businesses will go where there is talent and opportunity and where it can successfully invest. I don't think it needs to hold Rotherham back one bit. I know the scandal was a big thing for Rotherham, but the world moves on'*

When asked the same question, local councillor Participant I stated:

*I feel there are three historic reputations that could prevent private sector investment, the first is its reputation for heavy manual labour skills, rather than high level transferrable skills, and the second is the bad publicity around the CSE (child sexual exploitation) and companies wanting to attract families to the area with skill sets that would fill gaps short term. Lastly, is its reputation for not being proactive and forward thinking enough to allow Rotherham to draw down large pots of national funding in order to aid the regeneration process?*

Furthermore, he went on to say:

*There are many and varying challenges that face Rotherham over the next five years, firstly is the challenge around the government cuts to local authorities which are reducing the services to the people who need it the most. The second is the regeneration of the town centre and the re-profiling of its businesses including development of emerging markets. This would help to offset the government rate changes. We need to bring in more high value businesses with higher skills sets and higher employment prospects. To aid this, the level of higher education and practical skill sets will require more investment that will need to come from external sources to meet expectations of those new businesses. We also need to develop leisure facilities and green spaces to create a work life balance and encourage a healthier lifestyle.*

Participant I's final thought was: *'The last challenge will be to promote Rotherham as a positive place to live and shake off the reputation as the nationally recognized place of the grooming scandal'*. Similarly, Participant J said:

*'I think the final thing for me is you know, investing in the social capital of the town. It has a rich history and deserves to be a good town again. I am proud to say I come from Rotherham. People should be proud to come from Rotherham and again that's part of people changing their own attitudes, so they can have the confidence to do whatever they want to do'*

An issue raised by this study is that many of the key jobs in Rotherham are given to people from outside the town. This is illustrated by the following quote by Participant I who said:



*...how many of the professional roles within the Rotherham area are actually done by locals and how many are non-local residents and why people don't rise to these roles locally, or is it they have to move to attain better jobs because the jobs don't exist in Rotherham, therefore, giving them a choice of moving to achieve or staying working class throughout their lives*

Likewise, Participant E stated:

*The Chamber of Commerce have spent £250,000 on a book advertising the town (glossy magazine with photos of all the nice rural areas of the town). It's given to private investors such as Maclaren. There has been a great marketing campaign for the town. However, it's ok to fetch in Maclaren but who in Rotherham has the right skills for their work? We fetch in businesses, but we are employing outside people not locals. We need to regenerate and create the opportunities and retrain our workforce.*

It has been widely documented that many working people in the town are being forced to use foodbanks. When asked how she felt this. Participant J replied:

*That's where you get to the investment piece. The way out of this will be when Rotherham has a strong economy and actually looks to the investment at the economy of places like Sheffield. Even better than that is start with a strategy and create high quality opportunities for Rotherham children*

When asked if the new university campus will have an influence on an individual's social mobility and prospects Participant C replied: *'I honestly hope so. I think once people see the town centre start to regenerate then more people will help breathe life back into the town'.*

When asked the above question Participant G suggested that: *'Universities should be forced to have specific policies around class. If class was a protected characteristic, they wouldn't be able to get away with being elitist as much they as do'.* Participant I said of the new university that:

*'I do think the new university campus will bring more social mobility to the town, the big question is if it will create social mobility for people who then choose to leave the area, or if the social mobility then creates aspirations to better the community of Rotherham by drawing in higher class businesses'*

According to ONS (2017) the number of people from Rotherham who have qualification at NVQ4 or above is 25.1%, and the national average is 38.6%. Further, the number of people with no qualifications is 8.7%, the national average is 7.7%, and these statistics would indicate the need for a university campus in town. The data suggests that the new university should create more chance of social mobility. However, the problem that several participants indicated would be in keeping the people who achieve university degrees living and working in the town. It also highlighted the importance of closer links between higher education and local businesses. When asked for any further comments Participant C said:

*I just feel that in Rotherham at the moment there is too much separation and in fighting instead of unity. As a community I think there is some really exciting stuff happening in the town. It's*

*coming from ground level, its working-class people who are fighting to save the town. We have had enough now. We have had enough of people holding a negative view of Rotherham.*

In summary, this chapter has made comparisons between the findings from this study and the literature reviewed in chapter 2. The key themes of the findings were put into 4 separate sub-headings which were: Importance of Education, Implications of Class and Culture, Raising Aspirations & Sustaining Social Mobility and Rebuilding a Sense of Community & Place: Regeneration of Rotherham. Each of these themes have been discussed alongside the plans by the Rotherham Together Partnership 2025 for the future of Rotherham.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Conclusion**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

In conclusion, Chapter 5 will firstly, pull together and give a summary of the key findings and headline news from both the literature review, documentary data sources and the research data on the topics: social class, social mobility, education, communities and urban regeneration in relation to the case study: Rotherham. Secondly, the limitations of this study will be discussed for example: the approach, the sample size, ethnicity of participants, age range and the problems associated with using just one case study. Finally, the researcher will give her recommendations based upon the interpretations and analysis of the research findings. Also, a rationale will be given for other areas suitable for further research.

#### **5.2. Summary**

The key aim of this research project was focused on understanding whether social class may influence the amount of social capital, social mobility and life chances of people who live in Rotherham, which has been described as having deprived areas (Jay, 2014). The objectives were: to undertake a literature review; apply the theoretical framework of interpretivism; analyse documentary data; apply a qualitative approach by using semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample;

#### **5.3. Literature Review**

Within the literature review it was highlighted that the traditional 3-tier class model is outdated in contemporary Britain. Academics believe that social class is associated with inequalities and prejudices. It is argued that class is a result of capitalism, and about power and subordination. There is a new emerging 7-tier class system which takes into account different occupations. The term class is inextricably linked with socio-economic status alongside social and cultural capital. Because of the Great British Class Survey many in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not identify with any class category. According to the survey there is still a significant economic divide between the highest salary earners-the elite, and the precariat-who are the lowest earners (Savage, 2015). According to Professor Danny Dorling (2011) the divide is also geographic, and there is an obvious North/South divide in the UK in terms of both health and wealth. In the developed world there has been a growing anti-elite feeling. This was highlighted in the EU referendum where in towns such as Rotherham 67.4 per cent voted to leave, this indicates that the most

disadvantaged and marginalised people tended to vote to leave (Electoral Commission/EU results, 2016).

The importance of social capital was highlighted as being key within families and communities. It is believed that economic capital is the root to all other capitals: social and cultural. It was also noted that social networks affect people's life chances. Cultural capital it is believed can be passed on by parents in the form of education. Children raised in a household where the parents regularly visit the theatre and are well read have advantages over those who do not experience this. Absence of economic capital limits both social and cultural capital, which in turn limits an individual's life chances.

Since the 1950's social mobility has been studied and written about by sociologists. There have been many theories formulated on social mobility and post-World War 2 was described as 'the golden age of social mobility' mainly due to grammar schools whereby the brightest working-class students had the opportunity to go to university, which in turn led them to gain good jobs. Successive governments have promoted social mobility but with little success. It is widely believed by academics and the research participants that education is the key to social mobility.

According to Elliot (1965) 'schooling is to preserve the class and select the elite' (Reay, 2018, p.3). Since the 1980's there has been a growing culture of audit, regulation and assessment and the National Curriculum was introduced in 1988 (Reay, 2018, p.5). Around this time there were many job losses as major industries closed. It is argued that due to economic uncertainty, children's education began to suffer. Both the leading political parties claim to have education as a priority which will 'improve the lives of children from poor families' (The Economist, 2017, p. 28). However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a notable drop in the educational achievement of white working-class boys (Reay, 2018).

The Marmot Review (2010) highlighted the health inequalities in the UK. It was noted that the health and wellbeing of the population was dependent upon where in the country one lives. Also, it was noted that mortality rates were higher in cities and former coalfields. It is commonplace for the office for national statistics (ONS) to measure the population's wellbeing – the purpose being to inform social policies. The North/South divide is yet again evident as there is 2.8 years difference in the mortality rate for someone living in the Midlands or the North of England compared to London and the South-East. Urban regeneration (UR) has attempted to tackle poor health and social deprivation by creating policies which aim to improve the living conditions of those living in urban areas. UR is defined as the rebuilding

and investment in areas which require improvement of living conditions. However, since the 1980's it is felt that UR has placed the emphasis on office spaces, luxury accommodation, shopping malls and leisure facilities. Whereas, it is argued that the priority should be primarily on housing, security and social interactions, as it is felt that UR in some areas has further marginalised and displaced many low-income communities. To ensure success, it is further argued that such regeneration schemes must engage with these communities in the early planning stages, to address the health inequalities and socio-economic status of those who dwell in urban areas.

#### 5.4. Findings

The key theme which emerged during the analysis process was that of education. It was agreed by all the participants who took part in this study that education is key to improving one's life chances. It was felt that there must be a 'level playing field for all' whereby, everyone has the access to the same resources. Moreover, it was strongly felt that one's social; class impacts upon educational achievement and employment opportunities. Government cuts to budgets have hugely impacted on the education system and it was unanimous that more investment in education will benefit all the country in the long term. It became evident, that in Rotherham there is a 'poverty of aspirations' Many parents have low expectations, which in turn leads to low achievement levels. There is a need to assist parents to raise their aspirations for themselves and their children. The promotion of 'hope and vision' was how one participant described as being a clear link to aspirational experiences. So, it is made possible to see first-hand what opportunities which are out there would then promote drive and ambition and ultimately aspirations.

Those from working class backgrounds are more likely to be employed in low paid jobs, in unstable sectors, many working zero-hour contracts, which makes social mobility a challenge. It was also felt that prejudice limits social mobility. Some participants felt that when defining mobility, it was about moving between the different classes by whatever means. However, others strongly felt that the term social mobility has negative connotations, assuming that all working-class people aspire to move their social class position. It was pointed out that it was about pitting people against each other to climb the social ladder and it was viewed as a form of social control. The term also rests on the assumption that all working-class people want to be middle class. However, others view social mobility as a positive term, suggesting that individuals can be anything they want. Moreover, it is about recognising that success means

different things for different people as it is totally subjective. Further, it was pointed out that it is more about getting to where you want to, without barriers being in the way. This means it is the choice of the individual how far they go. It was suggested that if the government had social mobility at its heart, it could work back from that to drive policy.

In Rotherham there is evidence to suggest there is a divide between the different communities, particularly between the white/British and those who identify as British/Asian. The town has also seen a rise in migrants from within the EU, which has made the divisions within communities more apparent. It could be argued that the divisions had a direct influence on how the towns' people voted in the EU referendum. In Rotherham 67.9 per cent voted to leave (EU Referendum Results, 2016). Many would argue that immigration was the driver of this result, alongside the great number of demonstrations which were held in the town by far-right groups.

Re-building friendships between communities is viewed as being key to forming inclusive communities. Achieving this goal needs commitment from political leaders, as well as investment and funding for community groups in order that they can work together and share each other's visions. It was highlighted that the private sector would also benefit from investing in the strong working-class communities – who it was felt would not only thrive, also, they would give back to their own communities too. The community workers interviewed said that their job was to go into the most deprived areas and promote ideas in order to empower individuals to help themselves, if they are given the right tools to do so. They felt it was key to empower people to want better lives which in turn facilitates change.

Rotherham identifies as a strong northern working-class town, although others would say it has a large number of 'underclass' who are the long-term unemployed. However, there is an emerging lower middle class who still have a working-class mentality. It was argued that an individual's social class affects every area of life. Furthermore, class has implications on everything – how we act, how we speak, how we liaise with others. It was suggested that there are no benefits to the government investing in working class towns, because it is not in their interest. A point made by one participant was that it is a significant problem that class is not one of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, (2010). It was also noted that working class people are not taught to demand equality. Furthermore, universities should be forced to have specific policies around class, to put an end to the elitism which exists today. Some felt that the lines between the different social classes have become somewhat blurred and if it based upon household income then it is relative as to where in the country you live.

The Rotherham Partnership Plan 2025 aims to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents as well as improving the economic performance of the town, by inviting the private sector to invest in several different areas. However, the local council announced in November 2018 that there will be a funding shortfall of £30 million, so they have invited public opinion as to where the cuts will be. This means that since 2010 the cuts have been over £200 million. Alongside these cuts the town has an ageing population who require key public services (Rotherham, Gov.UK, 2018).

### 5.5. Limitations

There were several limitations to this study, the first being the sample size. The number of interviews the researcher aimed for was approximately twenty. However, the actual sample size was ten, since the recruitment process proved more difficult than the researcher had pre-empted. Ideally, a mixture of participants of varying ethnicities would have given the study greater validity. Unfortunately, the response rates were poor from the target sample, most of the sample used in this study, were white British with the exception of one participant who was born in Kashmir. Also, a high percentage of the participants identified as working class as those who identify as middle or upper class are scarce in the town. Perhaps, a mixed methods approach could have reached more people by using questionnaires alongside semi-structured interviews which would have given a broader view of Rotherham and its current problems. By using just one case study, which was that of Rotherham limited the scope of the research. Further research could encompass other countries who have divided communities and areas which are described as deprived to give a wider perspective on the problem.

### 5.6. Recommendations

The first recommendation is that perhaps it is time to use a different term other than social mobility, as successive governments have failed in the past in promoting the social mobility of the most disadvantaged and marginalised within British society. Many participants in this study, disliked the term as it was felt that it pitted us against each other and in turn was viewed as a form of social control. Second, I would argue that the traditional northern working-class culture no longer exists. It was a patriarchal culture that was dominated by working men. The traditional family household had working men (mainly in heavy industry) and stay at home women whose 'role' was to bring up the family. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we have blended families, same sex parents, lone parents, in fact the face of 'family' has changed dramatically. Women being the breadwinners and working to support their families is the norm. The demise

of the 'traditional family culture' has also meant that the sense of community has all but gone too. So perhaps redefining the working-class culture, will bring back a shared sense of community- but a new and different type of community that is diverse and colourful forward thinking and aspirational.

It is hoped that the newly opened university campus in the town will help to break down the elitism which still exists within higher education today. Hopefully, this will help to keep the local 'talent pool', rather than employing outsiders to work in key posts in the town. Previously students have moved away from the town to study and never returned, as opportunities were greater elsewhere (brain drain). This research would argue that it is key to raise the aspirations of both the education system and parents in the town, which in turn will encourage young people to aspire to be successful in whatever pathway they choose. Making informed choices is also key and needs to be promoted from an early age in order that children have clear direction and support to reach their goals. A recent study in America by the Pew Research Centre (2018) suggests that post-millennials (aged 6-24) or Generation Z could be the key, as this generation will be the most diverse and best educated group. This group are more likely to have parents who have been to university than any other generation (Fry and Parker, 2018). If this proves to be the case in the UK, then perhaps there are lessons to be learned from this generation as to how Rotherham can embrace its diversity and celebrate the differences. An idea for further study would be a longitudinal study following the first cohort of students at UCR (post-millennials) and what they go on to do after education career wise. A further proposal would be a biographical longitudinal study of a group of 'Baby Boomers' who left school in 1978. This would be the researchers own cohort so access to participants would be achievable.



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## Appendix 1. Ethics Form

### THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

#### School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

#### APPLICATION FORM

**Please complete and return via email to:**

**Kirsty Thomson SREP Administrator: [hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk)**

Name of applicant: Tracy Gisselle Roebuck

Title of study: Social Class, Social Mobility and Life Chances: A Case Study on Rotherham

Department: Human & Health Sciences

Date sent: 5/12/2017

Please provide sufficient detail below for SREP to assess the ethical conduct of your research. You should consult the guidance on filling out this form and applying to SREP at <http://www.hud.ac.uk/hhs/research/srep/>.

Researcher(s) details	Tracy Gisselle Roebuck-Postgraduate student-Masters by Research in sociology.
Supervisor(s) details	Dr Jamie Halsall & Dr Andrew Mycock
<b>All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)</b>	<b>YES</b> / NO / NOT APPLICABLE This proposal will not be considered unless the supervisor has submitted a report confirming that (s)he has read all documents and supports their submission to SREP
Aim / objectives	<p>The first aim of this research project is to establish an understanding of how <i>social class</i> may influence the <i>social capital</i>, <i>social mobility</i> and <i>life chances</i> of people living in a <i>deprived</i> area such as Rotherham, South Yorkshire. The second aim of this project is to determine whether the proposed economic plans for Rotherham, and the building of a university campus in the town will have a positive impact upon the future prospects, particularly the <i>social mobility</i> of the towns' young working-class people.</p> <p>To address these aims four objectives have been identified. The four objectives are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To undertake a literature review which will examine contemporary debates and issues on topics such as: <i>social capital</i> and <i>deprivation</i>, <i>social mobility</i> and <i>life chances</i>, <i>health</i> and <i>wellbeing</i>, proposed <i>urban regeneration</i>.</li> <li>• To apply the theoretical framework of structuralism.</li> <li>• To analyse documentary data such as government policies, local council policies and plans, minutes of council meetings, government enquiries and current literature.</li> <li>• To apply a qualitative approach which will include: between 10-20 semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of MP's, councillors, community group leaders and policy makers.</li> </ul>
Brief overview of research methods	The chosen research method will be qualitative in nature. The method of data collection will be semi-structured interviews with MP's, councillors, community group leaders and policy makers. The interviews with the participants will be conducted in a public setting, primarily in offices. The interviews will be approximately one hour long, however a pilot interview will be held prior to the research commencing. Privacy will be ensured in order to protect the anonymity of the participants and to s the data collected is confidential.
Project start date	18/09/2017



Project completion date	29/09/2018
Permissions for study	Identified a number of agencies for my research project and my supervisor is fully aware of who is to be interviewed and when-date/time etcetera.
Access to participants	Participants will be recruited directly via letter/email in the Rotherham area. It is possible a gatekeeper will also be used who will contact possible participants on my behalf.
Confidentiality	Participants will be informed that any data collected will be treated with the strictest confidence whilst adhering to the British Sociological Association guidelines, alongside guidance from the University of Huddersfield's ethics panel.
Anonymity	All data collected will be anonymised by allocating each participant a number to ensure that participants cannot not be identified, this will ensure they are not in any way compromised.
Right to withdraw	The consent form clearly states that participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without obligation.
Data Storage	The data collected will be transported and stored according to Data Protection rules. The data will be stored on devices which are encrypted, no data will be stored on personal computer it will be stored on the university hard drive using Uni-desktop. Any paper copies of data will be stored within the university in a locked cupboard in a locked room. Any field notes will be safely transported in the researchers locked briefcase and transferred to a secure place within the university in accordance with university policies.
Psychological support for participants	Should it be deemed necessary, any participant who suffers any type of distress which requires support will be directed to the appropriate agency/agencies? This is unlikely to occur as the subject matter is not of a sensitive nature.
Researcher safety / support (attach completed University Risk Analysis and Management form)	A risk analysis and management form has been completed in order to ensure researcher safety (Appendix 2).
Information sheet	See Appendix 4
Consent form	See Appendix 5
Letters / posters / flyers	See Appendix 3
Questionnaire / Interview guide	See Appendix 6
Debrief (if appropriate)	n/a
Dissemination of results	The data collected will be presented in a dissertation which is a requirement of MSc by Research.
Identify any potential conflicts of interest	
Does the research involve accessing data or visiting websites that could constitute a legal and/or reputational risk to yourself or the University if misconstrued?  Please state Yes/No  If Yes, please explain how you will minimise this risk	No

The next four questions in the grey boxes relate to Security Sensitive Information – please read the following guidance before completing these questions:  
<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/oversight-of-security-sensitive-research-material.pdf>

<p>Is the research commissioned by, or on behalf of the military or the intelligence services?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p> <p>If Yes, please outline the requirements from the funding body regarding the collection and storage of Security Sensitive Data</p>	No
<p>Is the research commissioned under an EU security call</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p> <p>If Yes, please outline the requirements from the funding body regarding the collection and storage of Security Sensitive Data</p>	No
<p>Does the research involve the acquisition of security clearances?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p> <p>If Yes, please outline how your data collection and storages complies with the requirements of these clearances</p>	No
<p>Does the research concern terrorist or extreme groups?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p> <p>If Yes, please complete a Security Sensitive Information Declaration Form</p>	No
<p>Does the research involve covert information gathering or active deception?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p>	No
<p>Does the research involve children under 18 or participants who may be unable to give fully informed consent?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p>	No
<p>Does the research involve prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)?</p> <p>Please state Yes/No</p>	No

Does the research involve significantly increased danger of physical or psychological harm or risk of significant discomfort for the researcher(s) and/or the participant(s), either from the research process or from the publication of findings?  Please state Yes/No	No
Does the research involve risk of unplanned disclosure of information you would be obliged to act on?  Please state Yes/No	No
Other issues	n/a
Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee / External Agencies	n/a
<b>Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy</b>	

**All documentation must be submitted to the SREP administrator. All proposals will be reviewed by two members of SREP.**

**If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form or any other queries relating to SREP's consideration of this proposal, please contact the SREP administrator (Kirsty Thomson) in the first instance – [hhs\\_srep@hud.ac.uk](mailto:hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk)**

## Appendix 2. Risk Assessment

### THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD: RISK ANALYSIS & MANAGEMENT

<b>ACTIVITY: Postgraduate research interviews</b>			<b>Name: Tracy Gisselle Roebuck</b>	
<b>LOCATION: Rotherham, South Yorkshire.</b>			<b>Date: 5/12/2017</b>	<b>Review Date:</b>
<b>Hazard(s) Identified</b>	<b>Details of Risk(s)</b>	<b>People at Risk</b>	<b>Risk management measures</b>	<b>Other comments</b>
	Personal safety	Tracy Roebuck	Ensure a check in system is in place, whereby a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party is aware of the whereabouts of researcher at all times.	
	For the researcher large crowded environments can be stressful and challenging, which in turn creates anxiety which can at times be temporarily debilitating.	Tracy Roebuck	Become familiar with the venues where the research will be undertaken to find out where the quieter areas and rest room are. Check when busy footfall times are.	

### Appendix 3. Letter of Invitation

Department of Behavioural & Social Sciences  
School of Human and Health Sciences  
University of Huddersfield  
Queensgate  
Huddersfield  
HD1 3DH

Tracy Roebuck  
2 Cinderhill Road  
Kimberworth Park  
Rotherham  
S61 3LB

Dear .....

I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Huddersfield studying sociology. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project the title of which is: Social Class, Social Mobility and life Chances: A Case Study on Rotherham. The first aim of this project is to investigate whether living in a town such as Rotherham, which is described as having many 'deprived' areas limits one's life chances. The second aim will examine whether the proposed economic plans for the town and the building of a university campus in the town will indeed promote social mobility for the towns young people?

I would greatly appreciate your participation in your role as ..... and hopefully the research findings will help to direct future local policies. The data collection will be in the form of a semi-structured interview which will take approximately between thirty minutes to an hour of your time. The data collected will be anonymised and confidential. I hope my work will be of value and interest and I would greatly appreciate your contribution.

Yours Sincerely

Tracy Roebuck BSc (Hons)

## Appendix 4. Participant Information Sheet

Title: Social Class, Social Mobility and Life Chances: A Case Study on Rotherham, South Yorkshire

You are being invited to participate in a study about social class and social mobility. The focus of the study will be on Rotherham, South Yorkshire. I would ask that you read the information sheet carefully in order that you understand what your participation will entail. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding the study.

**The purpose of this study is:** To ascertain whether being working-class and living in Rotherham is a barrier to social mobility and life chances, particularly with regard to educational and employment opportunities.

**Why have you been approached to participate in this study?** You have been approached to participate as a member of Rotherham's population, or because of your connections with the town.

**What is required from you?** If you agree you will be required to participate it will be in the form of an interview which will be approximately one-hour long. The interview will be recorded and safely stored on the researcher's computer.

**Do I have to participate?** Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Will my identity be disclosed?** All the information given will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, unless it is evident that anyone is at risk of serious harm.

**What will happen to the data collected?** The data collected will be stored securely and will be anonymised. Pseudonyms will be used when referring to the data collected, which will ultimately be used in the final report. Quotes from this study may be used in future publications.

**Who can I contact for further information?** If you require any further information, please contact the researcher on:

Name...Tracy Roebuck Email...Tracy.Roebuck@hud.ac.uk Telephone...07913632605

Project supervisor...Dr Jamie Halsall Email...J.P.Halsall@hud.ac.uk

## Appendix 5. University of Huddersfield Participant Consent Form

Title: Social Class, Social Mobility and Life Chances: A Case Study on Rotherham, Yorkshire

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your participation in this research project is appreciated and entirely voluntary.

Please tick box, sign and date

I have read and understood the information sheet attached regarding the nature and aims of this research.	
I consent to participate in this research project.	
I understand and agree that the interview may be recorded and stored safely.	
I understand my participation is entirely voluntary. I have the right to withdraw at from the research at any time.	
I understand that the data collected will be anonymised and pseudonyms will be used	
I understand that the data will be stored securely on the researcher's computer.	
I am aware that the data collected will be analysed and presented in a report format.	

(Copy to be retained by the participant/ Copy to be retained by researcher)

Name (please print) .....Telephone Number .....

Email .....Signed .....Date.....

## Appendix 6. Research Questions

Themes:

### Social Class

1. How would you say an individual's 'social class' impacts on their educational achievement and employment opportunities?
2. How would you define the class system in the UK in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in comparison to the post war period?
3. Why would you say successive governments have not invested enough in the regeneration of predominantly 'working class' towns classed as 'deprived' areas?
4. A recent report states that universities are still 'elitist', what do you feel can be done to promote equality in this area?

### Social Mobility

5. What is your understanding of the term social mobility?
6. As a policy maker/community leader what steps do you think could be taken to encourage social mobility in the UK?
7. Would you say income has a bearing on an individual's social mobility or is it more fundamental than this?
8. How would the promotion of social mobility also tackle social inequality in British society?
9. How can institutions encourage social mobility?

### Rotherham

10. Would you say social mobility is possible in a town such as Rotherham?
11. In your view what are the key challenges facing Rotherham?
12. What would you say is the main 'social class' of people living in Rotherham?
13. Why do you think the private sector should invest in Rotherham?
14. Do you feel the past reputation of Rotherham could prevent the private sector from investing in the town?
15. In your opinion what are the underlying issues which need tackling in Rotherham?
16. How do you feel about the fact that working people in Rotherham are living in fuel/food poverty and some are forced to use food banks?
17. Do you think the new proposed university campus in Rotherham will have a direct influence on an individual's social mobility and prospects within the town?
18. Are there any further comments? Or do you feel there any questions that I have overlooked in this study?



## Appendix 7. Sample Transcript

A section of an interview transcript with Participant J.

Questions 3,4,5,6

Q. 3. Why would you say successive governments have not invested in predominantly working-class town?

Part. J. I think maybe there hasn't been a joined-up plan that has been stuck to. I think there are a number of things like tried but often they have not been stuck with. Often, it's easy to think you can buy your way out of the challenges that some communities face and i think investment is just part of it. But you need a smarter strategy and back in the DFE we were doing these things called opportunity areas, it means that if you want to close the attainment gap and you want schools to get better then yes you have to work inside the school but some of the problems are fixed by working outside the schools also. I think your point about businesses helping kids have a sense of aspiration and then they will come in fired up and knowing what they want to do. It's about helping parents, and how they help their own kids. Maybe giving them a clearer sense of just how well their children can do. Sometimes parents just don't know. So, for me I think it's that there needs to be a more joined up approach and dare I say one that's a bit more de-politicised, I think it gets kicked around like a political football

Q.4. A recent report states that universities are still elitist, what do you feel can be done to promote equality in this area?

Part. J. I think the office for students is going to good at pressing universities to do better not just opening up access but then enabling kids to stay when they get there, so when you look at for example at (inaudible) their drop-out rates are higher. It's not just about getting young people into university it's about then making sure they have got the support to stay it through. Especially girls, who might be more likely to drop out, so i think they do need to do more, they need to look at admissions and it's good that Oxbridge are looking at these transition years where you have got high potential kids but maybe they need time to get their A level grades up to what they should be. A further thought for you would be erm... So, I did 3 A levels but i didn't pick the right A levels so i didn't get good grades but i was brilliant at economics and I got an A, and did it really matter to the university that i got, i don't know a D grade at physics A level? So, I think the issue with social mobility is that whilst ever you have got this points system if you like that looks at results across the board. If you are a kid that's gone to a college or a sixth form that the teachers weren't universally brilliant and advice on which exams to do, then that does disadvantage you. Ironically, it didn't matter a jot what my physics a level result was. It could have been a grade C but it just didn't matter, and yet it was part of how I was assessed to go on an economics degree course from which I subsequently got a first class honours in.

Well what i am saying is I think that i would like to see government have social mobility at its heart. You then work back from that to say how that drives policy.

Q. 5. What is your understanding of the term social mobility?

Part. J. For me it's about where you start not defining where you get to. Also, it's about recognising that success for different people is different. So i think the danger is it's all about getting to the very top, actually that's not how I see it. I think it's more about getting to where you want to, and not having barriers unnecessarily in place so it's your decision how far you go, not someone else's.

Q. 6. As a policy maker what steps do you think can be taken to encourage social mobility?

Part. J. Well, I have published the...there are lots of different bits to this. It starts with education because i think if people can't develop their talents then the opportunities to use them don't crop up so i think we need to level up our education results for kids wherever they are. I don't accept that there are some communities that have got schools that aren't doing as well for those kids, I thinks it's just not on. It's not on and what has always struck me is why we think any of this is ok, I am always surprised that people haven't been up in arms about it. I think the reason why is because in a funny way you don't miss what you have never had. i think if you have not seen opportunity that other people have had then you don't realise you should have had it. In the social media world people do now, and that's partly why it's becoming more urgent. Then I think businesses and companies have to now really step up to the plate, and I think they are. That's what my social mobility pledge is all about. Morrison's have just signed up, which is great, but the thing is they're the organisations, not all of the private sector, but employers take that talent, they then have options to keep developing it and how they use it. It is to their advantage, that's why a lot of companies are now doing this because they want to fish in a larger talent pool. It's about working with schools to ensure kids have got skills, it's about employment, so being open for access so that young people know what their opportunities are then they can try and get them and know how to get them. Then I think it's about progression, this is something that there hasn't been enough collective thought on, i think by British businesses. That's why I am starting to get the pledging businesses to look at this. What can they do more, together, to make sure wherever you are working you can still have the chance to develop yourself throughout your adult life. We have never had a good strategy on that and we need one.

## Appendix 8. Key Themes

Participant A: educational achievement, employment opportunities, aspirations, Institutional barriers, prejudice, social mobility

Participant B: aspirations, meritocracy, poverty, capitalism, tuition fees, social mobility, education, investment, culture, community, Rotherham's development

Participant C: community, investment, tuition fees, social mobility, education, Rotherham's people, government funding, regeneration

Participant D: education, government funding, social mobility, tuition fees, aspirations, communities, deprivation

Participant E: class, communities, education, aspirations, government funding, inequality, racial problems, culture, class, regeneration, unemployment

Participant F: class, culture, education, elitism, networks, opportunities, social mobility, health and well-being, culture, diversity

Participant G: aspirations, class, equality, meritocracy, social mobility, regeneration, elitism, education, communities, diversity, economic capital, capitalism, race, Rotherham

Participant H: diversity, equality, class social mobility, social/cultural capital, racism

Participant I: class, elitism, tuition fees, social mobility, education, aspirations, opportunities, networking, inequality/equality, government funding, communities, Rotherham investment, racism, poverty

Participant J: class, communities, opportunities, social mobility, education (attainment gap 2017), employment, social capital, skills, culture, social/economic capital, Rotherham investment

Table of Themes

1. Education	Raised by 8 of 10 participants
2. Aspirations	Raised by 8 of 10 participants
3. Social Mobility	Raised by 7 of 10 participants
4. Community	Raised by 7 of 10 participants
5. Class	Raised by 6 of 10 participants
6. Culture	Raised by 6 of 10 participants
7. Rotherham	Raised by 6 of 10 participants
8. Social and Economic Capital	Raised by 4 of 10 participants
9. Tuition Fees	Raised by 3 of 10 participants
10. Government Funding	Raised by 3 of 10 participants

Themes	Quotes
1. Education	<p>‘Social class impacts hugely on an individual’s educational achievement and employment opportunities. Children from working class backgrounds are frequently out performed by children from middle class backgrounds, despite a similar range of ability being displayed across all social classes’ (Part A).</p> <p>‘Education is the key to everything’ (Part B).</p> <p>‘...a lot more needs to be invested in the education system. I think there needs to be a level playing field so that we can enjoy education and so everyone has the same access to resources’ (Part C).</p> <p>‘I think education is fundamental. Just doing well in education on its own is not enough – you still need access to certain networks and places and having experiences that we can’t replicate’ (Part F).</p>
2. Aspirations	<p>‘...I would promote mobility using practical examples of entrepreneurs who have come from lower social backgrounds to raise aspirations’ (Part 1).</p> <p>‘It is clear that other factors such as low expectations, aspirations or economic issues play a part in determining achievement’ (Part A).</p> <p>‘The struggle to raise aspirations in people is a normality’ (Part B).</p> <p>‘...the bringing in tuition fees, the cutting of budgets to schools is closing down the aspirations, closing down the sense of we can, we can achieve this is the biggest problem’ (Part B).</p> <p>‘If you treat people in a way that encourages them to aspire to dream then you know... anyway it’s about giving people the ability to dream and fulfil their dreams’ (Part B).</p> <p>‘Parents need to raise their aspirations for their children’ (Part E).</p> <p>‘There’s a lot in the news at the moment about Amanda Spielman saying working class kids lack aspiration but I think we lack hope – and maybe a bit of vision’ (Part G).</p> <p>‘I think people need to travel to experience other areas and also break the mind-set that your life is mapped out for you, I believe seeing more aspirational areas gives you the drive to progress in your life’ (Part I).</p>
3. Social Mobility	<p>‘Those from working class backgrounds are more likely to be employed in low paid, unstable sectors. As a result, social mobility can be extremely challenging. However, I do not believe that income is the sole factor, with many others, including prejudice, conspiring to limit social mobility’ (Part A).</p> <p>‘Social mobility should be about creating work, and a workforce who feel fulfilled and are valued in what they do’ (Part B).</p> <p>‘The term social mobility to me means being born into one class but through different factors being able to transfer from one class to another’ (Part I).</p> <p>‘I see social mobility as a negative thing. It’s sort of saying we should all want to move out of whatever social class or position you are in. I think people should be proud of where they are on the social ladder. Pitting people against each other is a way of keeping people under control...’ (Part C).</p> <p>‘I struggle with the words social mobility’ (Part C).</p> <p>‘I think it applies more generally to people who are moving from a lower income bracket or experience bracket and they are able to travel along those strata not just of class but also in terms of</p>

	<p>professionalism, it could also be culture and lots of other things. I don't just think it's about money' (Part F).</p> <p>'I hate this term, it was invented to stop us talking about class. If you deconstruct it, it rests on the assumption that we all want to be middle class. It only works one way! A posh person on the streets is still a posh person' (Part G).</p> <p>'I see it as a positive term, one which suggests that individuals can be anything they want to be' (Part H).</p> <p>'For me it's about where you start not defining where you get to. Also, it's about recognising that success for different people is different. I think it's more about getting where you want to, and not having the barriers unnecessarily in place so it's your decision how far you go, not someone else's' (Part J).</p> <p>'I would like to see government have social mobility at its heart. You can then work back from that and say how does that drive policy?' (Part J).</p>
4. Community	<p>'I have very little time for the private sector, because they are about profit and not about serving our local community' (Part B).</p> <p>'The level of community cohesion has gone down in the thirty years I have lived here. There is more alienation between the ethnic minorities' (part B).</p> <p>'Interweaving and working on friendships that's how to build a community' (Part C).</p> <p>'...it's things we can do such as social inclusion where we learn about each other's communities. Again, it's down to investment in communities and commitment from community leaders' (Part C).</p> <p>'There needs to be more funding available to work with community groups and to engage with communities so they work together and share each other's visions' (Part C).</p> <p>'If the private sector invested in Rotherham they would reap the benefits that strong working class communities can achieve anything and produce anything. If you invest in them they will give back to their communities' (Part C).</p> <p>'Within small communities there is a divide between the classes'</p> <p>'There's no sense of community' (Part E).</p> <p>'We are employed to help individual get off their backsides and improve their social well-being, their communities and their lives basically. We give them the tools but it's more about empowerment so they will help themselves' (Par E).</p>
5. Class	<p>'Institutional barriers to educational achievement for children from working class backgrounds have far reaching consequences. As policy makers, it is essential that we ensure that all children, whatever their background, are able to reach their full potential' (Part A).</p> <p>'There is an upper class and upper middle class who look after their own interests and really centre around the Conservative party and the government' (Part B).</p> <p>'Rotherham is a very working class community, that's why the people are so nice' (Part B).</p> <p>'Someone's social class affects every area of life. I feel so strongly that a lot of working class parents even though they say they want better for their children they still have this mentality 'don't look above your station' or try to achieve too much or you will be knocked down. They never want to see their children fail so I think</p>

	<p>they sometimes set limits. They want you to do well but also remember your working class roots' (Part C).</p> <p>'It does not benefit the Conservative government to invest in working class areas because they don't get the vote from working class areas and they don't make money from them' (Part C).</p> <p>'I do think you might be treated differently at university because of your class, so you are paying the same money but you are not all treated equally' (Part D).</p> <p>'Class has an implication on everything, how you act, how you talk, how you liaise with individuals. What makes me stand out is that I have cultural differences as well as class difference' (Part F).</p> <p>'In Rotherham we are predominantly working class, but without a doubt we have a growing lower middle class. I would say its lower middle class but with a working class mentality' (Part F).</p> <p>'The truth is the way they think and the way they are is still working class. I think that's the nebulous nature of class today in places like Rotherham. It's a bit confused and not clear cut' (Part F).</p> <p>It's a significant problem that class is not one of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act' (Part G).</p> <p>'Working class people are not taught to demand equality' (Part G).</p> <p>'Universities should be forced to have specific policies around class. If class was a protected characteristic, they wouldn't be able to get away with being elitist as much as they do' (Part H).</p> <p>'I think the class system does still exist, but the lines between the different classes are now blurred more than in the post war period' (Part I).</p>
6. Rotherham	<p>'What we are trying to do with ROAR (Rotherham Open Arts Renaissance) is to create a healthy and vibrant culture world. Having something where culture is embedded. The point is arts and culture make people feel good (Part B).</p>

## Appendix 9. Profile of Participants/Interviewees

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Date</u>
Participant A	Female	58	White/British	Politician 5/4/18
Participant B	Male	67	White/British	Retired teacher 20/5/18
Participant C	Male	52	White/British	LGBTQ activist 20/5/18
Participant D	Female	23	White/British	Community worker 18/5/18
Participant E	Female	52	White/British	Community worker 18/5/18
Participant F	Female	42	Kashmiri	Politician 10/6/18
Participant G	Male	22	White/British	Student 20/6/18
Participant H	Female	50	White/British	Community educator 20/6/18
Participant I	Male	45	White/British	Politician 25/7/18
Participant J	Female	49	White/British	Politician 15/8/18

## Appendix 10. Wheel of Fortune

### WHEELS OF FORTUNE

Classifying British people according to their levels of the three capitals — wealth, culture and networks — results in seven classes, including two polar opposites, an elite and a ‘precariat’.

#### ■ Economic capital

- A. Income
- B. Savings and property

#### ■ Cultural capital

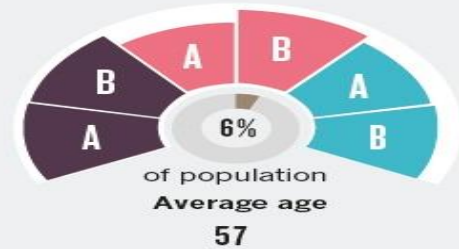
- A. Emerging cultural capital (such as sport or gigs)
- B. Highbrow cultural capital (classical music or theatre)

#### ■ Social capital

- A. Average social status of acquaintances
- B. Number of different occupations in your social group

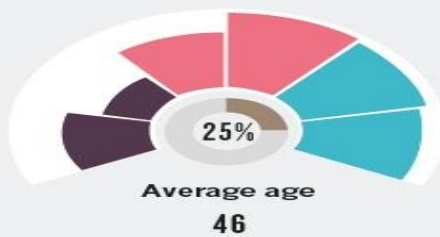
#### ELITE

Wealthiest and most privileged



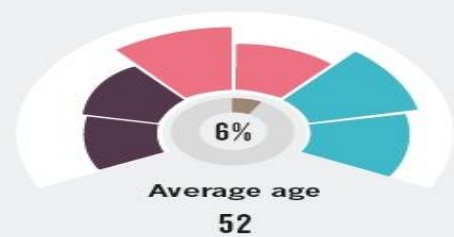
#### ESTABLISHED MIDDLE CLASS

Most gregarious and the second wealthiest



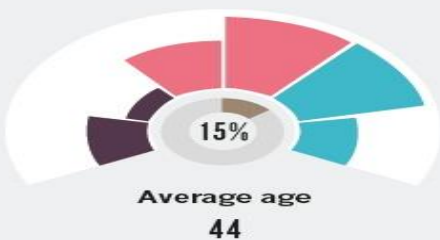
#### TECHNICAL MIDDLE CLASS

Small, distinctive and prosperous group



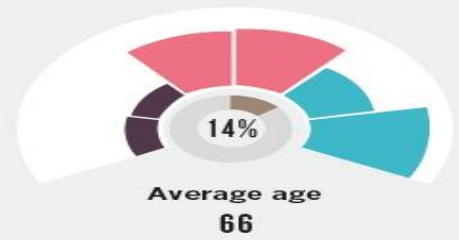
#### NEW AFFLUENT WORKERS

Lots of cultural interests and average wealth



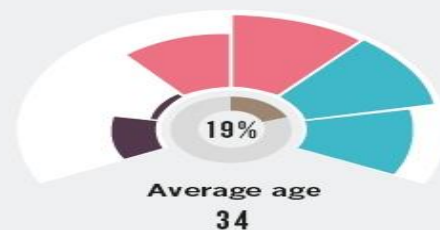
#### TRADITIONAL WORKING CLASS

Low for economic, social and cultural factors



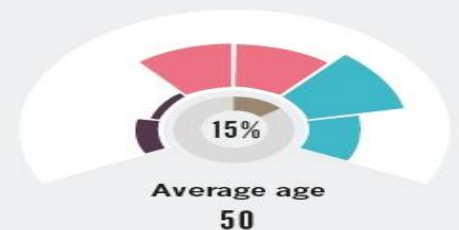
#### EMERGENT SERVICE WORKERS

Financially insecure but high for social and cultural factors



#### PRECARIAT

Poorest and most deprived



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